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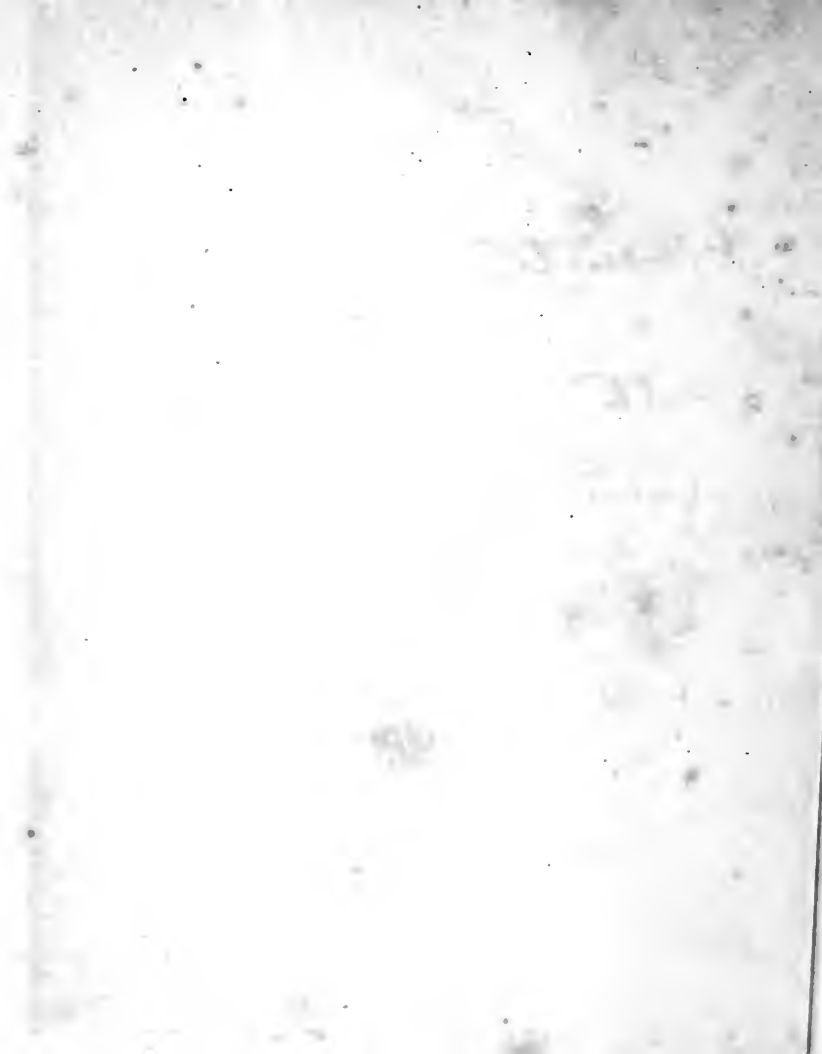
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Hyacinth M. Edmonds -

with loving Christmas
greetings from Mother
& the Children -

Mayne Hall.

June 1909.



POEMS



POEMS

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Poems

BY

AGNES L. STORRIE

J. W. KETTLEWELL
SYDNEY

1909

Webbsdale, Shoosmith Ltd., Printers, 117 Clarence St., Sydney.

PR
1899
K576-A17
1951
TO THE DEAR AND DEATHLESS MEMORY OF

MY FATHER

I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK.

A string is snapped in the echoing lute,
A chord in the harmony fallen mute,
There's a tint the less in the rainbow-span,
And a missing point in the stars' bright plan,
A hand-clasp lacking, the warmth it gave
Lost, and the earth has another grave.

A taper quenched by a mighty breath,
A gate unbarred by the hand of Death,
A magnet, set in a rarer air,
To draw our thoughts and desires there,
Thus, Dear Heart, through all our grief for thee
Comes the healing balm of thy memory.

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In the Surf.

Here's an ocean ball-room, come with me and dance a
measure,

Trip it, where the little waves are quarrelling for
pleasure,

At our feet the rainbow bubbles make a sudden sally,
Quick white foam-flowers bud and blossom in an emerald
valley.

Boldly an imperious wave sweeps your feet from under,
Swings you to the right-about booming crystal thunder,
Here a shower of melting pearl gems your floating
tresses,

While a sinuous emerald arm whelms you with caresses.

Softly twangs the great sea-harp, smit by airy fingers,
In its song a haunting strain of siren sweetness lingers.
Steel your heart against its lures, beware of its devotion,
Dark and plumbless are the depths of this smiling
ocean,

Cold, ah! cold, their silences would break the heart
within you,

Let them woo, these gallant waves, but never let them
win you.

IN THE SURF.

What would you be, you breathing mite, in such a grasp
 titanic,
 Your very being overwhelmed in energies organic?
 You with your immortal soul, housed in its crazy dwell-
 ing,
 Your brain that weighs the stars the while its little hour
 is knelling.
 Get you to the shallows there, go frolic with the bubbles,
 They with you are truly kin, full of frothy troubles,
 Shining in an amorous sun, full of moment's laughter
 And vital force, then lost to sight, and after? after?
 after?

Are you, pray, allied to this great pendulum, that
 swinging
 From life to death, from death to life its fated hour
 is bringing?
 Or are you part of the Great Thought, that works unseen
 behind it,
 And shall you through æons to come evolve—oh! never
 mind it,
 Turn you to the sun again, feel his touches tender,
 Dance among the crested waves, glorying in their
 splendour,

IN THE SURF.

Take the great sea's briny kiss, like a lover loyal,
Though he'd slay you—just as soon! his sepulture is royal.

In his glittering ballroom come with me and dance a
measure,

Where the wavelets run amok, delirious with pleasure.
Dive into this emerald cave, foam-flags wave about it,
Oh! the cruel, hurtling sea, I love it! love it! love it!

Revelation.

Here, on this broad divan your dainty skirts were spread,
Here is the dint made by your resting golden head,
And yet, they tell me, O! Heart's Darling you are dead.

The daffodils I sent you, undismayed,
Still stand like gallant sentinels arrayed
In golden armour, surely they would shed
Some of their beauty if another flower were dead.

Death! death! what is it? in this flower-filled room,
Fragrant with your late presence and the flawless bloom
Of living, soulless blossoms, can I stay my breath
And by my very will invade your realm of death?

REVELATION.

Where are you, Darling? The importunate air
 Vibrates with yearning, and incorporate I share
 The mystery that surrounds you. Down the steep
 Gold ladder of this sunbeam there shall sweep

Your naked soul, and clash against my own,
 Our very essences like flames together blown,
 And spirit into spirit fused in one ecstasie breath
 We shall triumphantly o'erleap this carnal gulf of
 death.

I feel a tremor in my soul, it senses unseen things,
 And from its chrysalis with pain puts forth imperious
 wings,
 Wings well equipped for rarer airs, and finer altitudes
 Where, at the very fount of life, no hint of death
 intrudes.

O! softer than terrestrial airs are these that round me
 blow,
 More luminous than suns of earth these happy planets
 glow,
 And, cleansed from its poor mortal scales my vision
 pierces clear
 The limitless expanses of this radiant atmosphere.

REVELATION.

And as a seed deep sown in earth brings forth a living
 flower,
 My spirit bursts its husk of clay and wins its rightful
 power.
 Not vainly were our souls transfused with an immortal
 breath,
 And not in vain we test its power across this void of
 death.

Here are you, Darling, closer than the perfume to the rose,
 Than its music to the harp-string your living presence
 grows
 Into my being, and I feel, I know—O! God!—I see
 Across the barriers of sense, and through its mystery.

Now may the empty world revolve, and clay reclaim its
 clay,
 Now may the processes of time pursue their destined
 way,
 For, like a flash that stabs the gloom when the storm
 is at its height,
 My spirit in her agony has glimpsed a heavenly light,
 No more am I the fettered slave of my humanity,
 The secret of the Universe has been revealed to me.

Little Son.

The days are passing, one by one,
Through a shadowy door,
Blithely we see them enter,
They return no more.

Where do they go, and why,
Out of our view?
Little son, give me your hand,
We're going too.

Some day—perhaps some night,
No one can tell—
We shall pass through that door.
All will be well.

Pass from all yesterdays,
That will be good,
Then we shall understand,
And be understood.

Death keeps that shadowy door,
And one by one
We shall pass through it,
Dear little son.

LITTLE SON.

Look at him steadily,
With quiet breath,
This keeper of the door,
Mortals call Death.

Look at him steadily,
Knowing it true
That he only lifts the latch,
We shall pass through,

Into a brighter day,
Shielded from sorrow,
The goal of every soul,
God's great To-morrow.

A Protest.

Oh! ye who blame Australia,
Who tauntingly upbraid
Her woods for lack of colour,
Her trees that cast no shade,

Her birds that know no music,
Her flowers without perfume,
And the drear and ghastly phantoms
That breed amid the gloom

Of spectral forests, gray and wild,
Where crawls a shrunken stream,
And weird, uncanny creatures
Disport, as in a dream.

Oh! ye who draw such pictures,
Whose spirits thus recoil,
Are aliens! aliens!—Never one
Is native to the soil,

For we, thine own, Australia—
Bred of thee, blood and bone—
We thrill responsive to thy voice,
Answer thee tone for tone.

A PROTEST.

We find no lack of colour
Where thy great forests spread
Their burnished foliage, crested here
With gold, and there with red.

For us the winds are laden
With exquisite perfume,
Delicate boronia scents,
And breath of wattle-bloom.

Spices of white clover,
That clusters at our feet,
And airs from wild clematis stars
Sun-warm and honey-sweet.

Leagues of red epacris,
And aromatic whiffs
From myriad creepers blossoming
About the broken cliffs.

And we have ears so fashioned
That music seems to wake
When mopokes, through the scented dusk
Their soft indictments make.

A PROTEST.

Our spirits answer clearly
When, liquid as a brook,
That bubbles over golden sands,
In some fern-fringed nook,

The laughing-jack salutes the dawn
With clear and gurgling note,
That falls, as if in silver drops,
From his impetuous throat.

And parrots whistling cheerily,
From green and rustling heights,
And curlews wailing, wailing,
Through long, quiet, brooding nights.

All speak to us in patois,
That love alone imparts,
And aliens cannot master
The idiom of our hearts.

To us, when in the gloaming
The drooping she-oaks sing
Their low and plaintive music,
What thrilling echoes ring!

A PROTEST.

What yearnings pent within us,
What sweet, yet tragic strains
Find voice in these Æolian harps,
And tremble through our veins.

For us, the voice that murmurs
From out the dark-tressed tree,
In silhouette against the faint
Sky's twilight mystery,

Is an imprisoned spirit,
That whispers to our own
Oh! softly, softly! as a dream,
That visions the unknown.

For us, where 'mid the boulders,
Strewn wide from cliff and scar,
A hand's-breadth space of verdure
Shines like an emerald star,

And lures a velvet footstep,
A lissom form to spring
All noiseless from obscurity,
And browse, none hindering.

A PROTEST.

This life has all the beauty
Of untamed woodland grace,
We feel in it the naiveté
That permeates the place.

The charm of things unsullied,
The luring mystery
That lies in an unopened bud,
A maiden's modesty.

A phantom thing, impalpable,
That words may not reveal,
The spirit of Australia
That we Australians feel.

What think ye of our sunsets?
Where have you ever seen
Such crystal depths of amethyst,
Such limpid seas of green.

What flower that ever budded
On earth's enamelled breast
Can match the magic blossom
That opens in the west

A PROTEST.

And over fields of azure
Its rosy petals sheds,
And those untrodden pathways
With golden pollen spreads.

Then fades in lovely pallors,
To grays, remote and far,
While from its withered calyx
Springs up a living star.

Oh! ye who blame Australia,
Who find her harsh and crude,
And meaningless and gloomy,
Oh! have ye never stood

Upon a plain, moon-lighted
And limitless as thought,
Where winds fall dumb, and languish
As in enchantment caught,

Oh! have ye stood—I ask it,
And in that silent place,
Your soul, alone and naked,
Regarded face to face.

A PROTEST.

Sing your own songs, Oh! aliens,
 Portray your native scenes,
 But let Australia's children
 Tell what Australia means.

Dumb Mouths.

Think ye, that if the living crystal tide
 That leaps against the shore could only guess
 By what foul sewers it shall be mortified,
 How filled with death, and every loathsomeness,
 And could the tinted weeds that swing below
 The laughing bubbles at the bay's blue month
 Foresee the sickly, slimy things they grow
 When drawn to perish in the ebb-tide's drought,
 Could any life retain its vital force
 If it but knew the thing it shall become?
 Could the bold future step upon her course
 Were not the past so mercifully dumb?

Aha! the wisdom of the hooded eyes,
 Aha! the force that drives so blindly on.
 Here's to the silent mouth that utters lies,
 Here's to the dark that never says it shone!

DUMB MOUTHS.

What blossom fears to break its sheath of green
Because of fallen petals in the dust?
What fears to be, because so much has been,
And is not, food for time's unfailing lust?
What human heart restrains its passion thrill
Because of other hearts that thrilled and died?
Who falters as he climbs ambition's hill,
Because the path leads down the other side?
This is the bush that drugs creation's wine,
This is the poppy fume of nature's breath
Whereby she drowns, in lusty life, the sign
Of ultimate and universal death.

And whereunto this zeal that never fails?
And to what goal doth she so sternly press?
What purpose is pursued, and what avails
This endless stream of human nothingness?
Ah! does the leaf that falls when it is meet
Rebel? or do the parting atoms chide?
Do withered moons remonstrate? or the feet
Of ordered processes refuse to glide
On their appointed paths because so soon
They shall be but a road for others' tread?
From all the long array of morn and noon
And night, and seasons born, and seasons dead,

DUMB MOUTHS.

Has one voice cried resistance? Then shalt thou
 Who only of created things can know
 Some glimmering sense of God, refuse to bow
 Submission? Fill thy little niche and go.

The New Year.

Hush thy breathing for a minute,
 Tell me, can'st thou hear
 Music with a magic in it,
 Like a silver-throated linnet,
 Singing at thine ear?

'Tis the new-born year awaking
 Every movement harmony,
 Like a wave melodious breaking,
 Or long she-oak tassels making
 Motion, melody.

For the great Creator stringeth,
 On the thread of Time,
 Years, like pearls, and each one ringeth
 Musical, then pendent swingeth,
 Rounded in a chime.

THE NEW YEAR.

Close thine eyes to earthly seeming,
Tell me, can'st thou see
One with white robes softly gleaming,
Stepping, from her sisters dreaming,
Out to welcome thee?

'Tis the sweet New Year arising,
Stretching forth her hand,
Fresh from God, to thee devising
Gifts well worthy of thy prizing
Could'st thou understand.

For a mighty Monarch sendeth
This ambassador to thee,
From her open palm she lendeth
To thy life as she descendeth
Opportunity.

Keep this pearl from stain or breaking
That it still may ring
Musical, when God is making
Of thy years a necklet, taking
Only such as sing.

THE NEW YEAR.

Take this sweet New Year, and greet her
With an earnest hand,
That, when fled, she may be sweeter,
And thou need'st not fear to meet her
In her native land.

A Poppy.

Poppy! delicate and fine,
Is it really true that you
Are no better than a cheat
Set among the golden wheat?
That for all your lovely red
You will never make us bread,
That though with an elfin guile
You have caught the sun's warm smile
Captive for a little while
There is no real use in you—
Tell me, tell me, is it true,
Poppy, delicate and fine?

A POPPY.

When I lift your leaves apart
And about your hidden heart
See a dust of powdered gold,
And beneath each shimmering fold
Find a rarer, richer hue,
Must I still maintain it true
That there is no use in you,
 Poppy, delicate and fine?

When the summer days are spent,
When the reaper's hook is bent,
When is garnered all the grain,
Shall men say you lived in vain?
No, for, like a lovely thought
In a blossom's semblance caught,
Your own meaning you have taught.
And I know, by Hope's eyes brightened
By the weight of sorrow lightened,
By a faith deepened and heightened,
I know, I know it is not true
That there is no use in you,
 Poppy, delicate and fine.

Twenty Gallons of Sleep.

Measure me out from the fathomless tun
That somewhere or other you keep
In your vasty cellars, Oh! wealthy one,
Twenty gallons of sleep.

Twenty gallons of balmy sleep,
Dreamless, and deep, and mild,
Of the excellent brand you used to keep
When I was a little child.

I've tasted all of your vaunted stock,
Your clarets and ports of Spain,
The liquid gold of your famous hock,
And your matchless dry champagne.

Of your rich muscats, and your sherries fine,
I've drunk both well and deep,
Then, measure me out, Oh! merchant mine,
Twenty gallons of sleep.

Twenty gallons of slumber soft,
Of the innocent, baby kind,
When the angels flutter their wings aloft,
And the pillow with down is lined.

TWENTY GALLONS OF SLEEP.

And eyelids droop over tired eyes,
That never have learned to weep,
And the soul, like a ship in harbour, lies
Twenty gallons of sleep!

I have drawn the corks, and drained the lees
Of every vintage pressed,
If I've felt the sting of my honey bees,
I've taken it with the rest.

I have lived my life, and I'll not repine,
As I sowed I was bound to reap,
Then measure me out, Oh! merchant mine,
Twenty gallons of sleep.

Two Pathways.

There is always a possible pathway,
 Until our hair turns gray,
By which the dreams of our golden youth
 May really come some day,
And there's always room for a fairy foot
 To flutter our own beside,
And wish-horses, supple and strong enough
 To give our hopes a ride.
There is always a possible pathway
 Until our hair is gray,
By which our tardy heart's desire
 Shall sometime find its way.
There is always a certain pathway
 By which, when our hair is gray,
We may slip along into silence,
 And never miss the way.
And the dreams we dreamed, and the fame we
 missed,
 And the love that we never won,
May be gathered there, to welcome us,
 When at last the journey's done.

Love is Best.

“You ask me for my love,” she said; “your voice is
full of passion,

You woo me as a man should woo, in bold and earnest
fashion.

Not all the vows that I have heard of love and deep
devotion

Have stirred my heart to feel the least faint answering
emotion;

And I have said unto myself, ‘No man has power to win
me,

Yet now I feel as if you touched some strange, new
feeling in me,

I cannot send you from my side with my accustomed
coldness,

I seem to fear—yet find a charm in your insistent bold-
ness.

And yet—Why should I yield my heart unto your
passion’s pleading?

I hold it as a royal gift, some high requital needing.

In days of old, such men as you fought for their lady’s
favour,

And of their trophies, these, the best—their fame and
honour—gave her.

LOVE IS BEST.

Such days are o'er—brave days they were; yet life hath
still some treasure

That may be won, by those who will to forfeit ease and
pleasure.

You cannot buy my love with gold, nor with high power
and station,

I have them all—and light they weigh, in my soul's
estimation.

Yet I would fain that he to whom I give myself for
ever,

In bonds that neither Time nor Death itself shall dare
to sever,

Should have from Life some laurels won, have laid some
claim to Fame,

And carved on History's ample breast the letters of his
name.

There is no war in this new land, no field for brave
endeavour

To right the wronged, to free the slave, and win renown
for ever,

Yet Fame hath still some prizes left to give to those
who love her,

There are great tasks to overcome, new countries to
discover;

LOVE IS BEST.

There is a cry for such as you—men fit for Fortune's
chances,

To cross a new land and explore its wild unknown
expanses.

What if the way is hedged with toil, with hardship, and
with danger?

If hostile natives bar the way, and slay the invading
stranger.

What if the fate of former bands hangs like a doom
above you,

Succeed where others fail, if you indeed would have me
love you.

Push through your way where others pause, pluck laurels
from their grave,

And where brave men have failed and died, *be braver
than the brave.*

Then will I give you love for love, so would I test and
prove you.

And know that with my hand at stake, no craven fears
can move you.

And, that my promise I will keep, until you come,
unbroken,

This rose-red ribbon from my throat I give you for a
token.

LOVE IS BEST.

Bind it upon your breast, my knight, 'tis but a slender
burden.

Go forth and win—fear no defeat, my love will be your
guerdon.”

He took the ribbon from her hand, he looked deep in her
eyes,

He said, “Your task is easy with so exquisite a prize,
If this can win you, I will win, and yet I tell you clearly,
Love does not ask of love a proof, won painfully and
dearly,

Ambition may allure, but never can it satisfy,
And I will prove it, Love is best! and now I go—
Good-bye!”

* * * * *

Oh, still the silent desert lies far in the unknown land,
The sunlight like a yellow pall upon its burning sand.
There is a beauty—strange, I own, in such a land as
this,

That those who prize earth's every form were surely loth
to miss.

A beauty not of swelling glades, and blossom-spangled
swards,

A beauty not akin to that a gentler land affords.

LOVE IS BEST.

No mountain tops to pierce the sky, no valleys sweet with
rivers,

No shadowy haunt of fern and flower, where silver moon-
light quivers;

But something strange, and yet sublime, a wild barbaric
splendour,

With lines as harsh and tints as crude as Nature's brush
can render.

The level plain—a waveless sea—far as the eye can
follow,

Just broken there by soft grey blots of blue-bush in a
hollow,

And distant hills, as dim as dreams—a hazy blue
illusion,

That seem as if a breath of wind would waste them in
diffusion;

And 'mid the sterile stretch of stones, as from a mountain
shattered,

That lie just as grotesquely grouped as when they first
were scattered,

A sudden blaze of scarlet flowers, that bear Sturt's
honoured name,

As if the land had graven it upon her heart in flame;

LOVE IS BEST.

A blaze of colour, rich and deep, on earth's swart bosom
 lying,

Like one sweet thought in a dark soul, that conquers all
 denying,

And over all a golden flood, a shadeless, shimmering ocean
 Of yellow light grown hazy with its own lost sense of
 motion.

No sound of bird, no human voice to cleave the air
 asunder,

But deep, profound repose that holds the soul spell-bound
 in wonder.

In such a land as this, when day with folded amber
 pinions

Died, like a king surrounded by his scarlet-coated minions,
 A man lay dying on the sand—his horse lay dead
 beside him

Just where he fell—too weak to bear the man too weak
 to ride him.

The last was he—one left alone—of the imposing band
 That started bravely to explore a wild and unknown land.
 One only left! And he, with eyes grown dim with
 wasting thirst,

Watched the high dome of Heaven into a thousand
 beauties burst;

LOVE IS BEST.

Saw snowy clouds flush tender pink, then glow with
crimson fires;

Saw the golden gates of that fair land that holds our
hearts' desires.

He saw them open, and a flood of radiant light stream
out

As if some angel presence beckoned those who stood
without.

He had gone forth, and dared and done what others failed
to do;

When others fled appalled, or fell, he had pushed his
way through.

"If to succeed is fame," he said, "I have succeeded
well,

Yet, could they speak, a sorry tale my bleaching bones
will tell.

My life is spent—no hallowed light will linger on my
name;

Yet I have done what I essayed. O! empty dream of
fame

That lives but by the breath of men. Alas! how vain
a quest!

Death comes; I welcome him. Dear heart! I knew that
love was best!"

LOVE IS BEST.

The shadows fell, that vast, still land held silently the
 dead,
 But on his breast love's token glowed—a warm and
 living red.

Dorothy Dancing.

As the spirit of sound may dwell in a chord,
 And the spirit of thought be embalmed in a word,
 And the spirit of colour inhabit a rose,
 And the spirit of scent in its heart repose,
 So the spirit of motion lurks, graceful and fleet,
 In the exquisite moulding of Dorothy's feet.

Dorothy dancing!

Oh! think of the glancing
 Of Dorothy's dancing feet.

There are sweet flower-faces, and faces like flowers,
 There are laces in billows, and diamonds in showers,
 There are flocks of fans waving, like butterflies' wings,
 And with dreamy waltz music the pulsing air swings,

DOROTHY DANCING.

The violins sob, and the piccolos sigh,
And the harp chords in thrilling love-measures reply,
 And it's all to greet
 The musical beat
 Of Dorothy's dancing feet.

They rise and fall and they fall and rise,
And weave strange spells in my love-glamoured eyes,
Like blossoms that flutter soft breezes before,
They poise half an inch from the envious floor,
Then the delicate points of her little bronze shoes
Fall, light as the touch of night's moon-silvered dew,
 And the boards repeat
 The rhythmical beat
 Of Dorothy's dancing feet.

And they wind in and out, they flash to and fro,
And tangle my senses wherever they go;
I may lose my eyes, my ears, or my brain,
I may never inhale a rose perfume again,
But as long as my heart can remember to beat,
It will echo the music of Dorothy's feet.

Dorothy dancing!
Oh! think of the glancing
Of Dorothy's dancing feet.

A Song.

There is no day
When thou'rt away,
No hour of these so fraught with pain,
So full of gloom,
But learns to bloom,
Remembering thou wilt come again.

Oh! had'st thou heard
How every bird
Upon his bough has fallen mute,
Nor can rejoice
Till thy sweet voice
Shall tune for him his silver flute.

And every star
Hangs pale and far,
And fears to face the sombre skies,
Till like a sign,
To bid them shine,
Shall come the radiance of thine eyes.

But I can wait,
Though thou art late,
Because my heart is knit to thine;
And neither days
Nor severed ways
Can make thee more or less than mine.

Miss Lintlocks.

Miss Lintlocks sits where the morning sun
Has woven a golden mesh,
And the airs that pass across the grass
Are tender, and sweet, and fresh.

Miss Lintlocks sings in a crooning voice,
Like a wind through the water-reeds,
Of the strangest things, of flowers with wings,
And wonderful dancing weeds,

Of birds that talk, of clouds that make
Soft pillows for little ones,
And of sailing high thro' a purple sky
All sprinkled with silver suns.

Miss Lintlocks smiles at her dimpled foot
And nods at her tinted toes,
Then slips the tips 'tween her parted lips
And the point of her little nose,

For her knitted socks in the grass are hid
And her shoes are, she knows not where;
I fear, in sooth, to tell the truth
That Miss Lintlocks does not care.

MISS LINTLOCKS.

There are shimmering waves of greenest grass,
There's a soft wind from the south,
She surveys the skies with pensive eyes
And her pink toes in her mouth.

Miss Lintlocks knows what the flowers think,
She hears what the dust-motes say
As they spin and dance in the golden lance
That strikes through the shining day;

And the swinging leaves and the rosy balls
Of the oleander tree—
They flutter near to her little ear
And murmur drowsily.

Miss Lintlocks sways, like a blossom bowed
With a heartful of silver dew,
And her song grows dim, and a fringed rim
Sinks over her eyes' soft blue;

And the dimpled foot and the tinted toes
Have slipped from her loosened hold,
And lie like fair rose-petals there
Across the green and gold.

MISS LINTLOCKS.

Miss Lintlocks sleeps, and her tiny palms
On the grasses lie uncurl'd;
She is locked in a deep, sweet, childish sleep,
Unspotted from the world.

My little bud in the sunny grass!
My maid with the lint-white locks.
God keep thy feet from the toils, my sweet,
From thorns and bruising rocks!

I could see thy life in a mist of grief,
I could bear thou should'st suffer pain,
But I pray my breath may be held in death
Ere I see thee with spot or stain.

God keep thine ears for the whispering leaves,
Thine eyes for the bright sun-scroll,
While thy heart is free for their ministry
I'll fear not for thy soul.

The Opal in Her Hair.

'Tis a witch-light that allures me,
'Tis a star that beckons still,
That deludes, then reassures me,
Sways me at its wanton will.

'Tis the pure white light of reason
Shining far my heart above,
Now, by some strange act of treason,
'Tis the crimson glow of love.

At its core strange beauties shimmer—
Sunlight, moonlight, gloaming too ;
Reds that burn, and greens that glimmer
Into shifting shades of blue.

Bright and bold as sword-blades clashing,
Soft and sinuous as a smile,
From her dark hair sudden flashing
To enslave, command, beguile.

'Tis love's very spirit captured
And imprisoned in a stone.
The beholder, deeply raptured,
Vows to win it for his own;

THE OPAL IN HER HAIR.

Vows with heart athrob to win it,
 Yields himself unto the snare
 Of the molten magic in it,
 Of the opal in her hair.

To a Mandolin.

Oh! foolish little twittering mandolin
 Thrilling with emotions just as thin
 And flimsy as the ribbons, pink and blue,
 And amber-tinted, that envelop you.
 Oh! mimic passion, striking tinsel chords,
 Playing with earnestness, as children play with swords,
 Skimming across love's vast and unplumbed deeps,
 With flittering touches, as a swallow sweeps
 The surface of unfathomable seas,
 Her silken wing brushing immensities.
 Oh! heed thee, swallow! lest thou haply lose thyself,
 And the great sea thy little form engulf.
 Oh! heed thee, mandolin! lest o'er thy mimic woes,
 A wave of real passion sudden overflows.

Live Close to Nature.

Live close to Nature, lean thou on her breast,
 She hath repayment, she hath help and rest.
 Thy day so poor, so meagre-planned by fate,
 Take it to her and she will compensate,

Stores deep and vast

That will outlast

The heaviest drain thy famine need can make
 She hath, and in her fulness thou thy thirst can'st slake.

This loud incessant clamour in thine ears,
 Life's myriad voices, laughter, shrieks, and tears
 Drown them in her sweet silence, steep thy soul
 In those rich spaces where the planets roll

Their rhythmic swing

Unfaltering

From æon unto æon, while they fill
 The populous vault with silence thou too can'st be still.

Live close to Nature; when thy sudden thought
 All shuddering pauses, knowing thou art nought
 A breath—a vapour, when the warm live "me"
 So late rejoicing, sees Eternity

Full-face,

A breathing space,

LIVE CLOSE TO NATURE.

And falters, when thou can'st not think of God,
Think on the dear familiar earth His Mediator trod.

For thy poor heart was never meant to roam
In such cold altitudes, this is its home
Till, as a chrysalis bursts from its sheath
And wins its wings, thou shalt some day through death

Rise

With franchise

To larger spheres, but now for sanity
Live close to Nature. She was made for thee

And fits thy needs. Bethink thee, with the curse
Humanity was given this tender nurse,
This bountiful great mother-heart that knows
Of healing, in whose ample veins there flows

Triumphant still

The Omnipotent will

That woke creation, and with vital force
Renews the springs of being ever at their source.

Leave thou thy cities and their devious ways,
That do but sear thy thought and warp thy days

LIVE CLOSE TO NATURE.

In endless coils of custom, empty! vain!

A seed of folly bearing sheaves of pain.

Seek thou no more

The world's false lore,

But read this mighty volume writ for thee

In royal characters on the impassioned sea,

On snow-capped mountains parleying with the sun,

On dappled meadows where quick shadows run,

On palmy isles in living azure set,

On the moist bosom of a violet,

Look

Where a brook

Slips into dimpled rest in some lagoon,

And smiles a sleepy silver smile unto the moon.

Or linger where the moss is softly spread

In quiet dells, the green towers overhead

Agog with secrets, rumours of a breeze

Of buds unsheathing, nesting mysteries,

And poised as light

As Saturn's might

A harebell swinging on its slender stem,

Think on these revelations, deeply ponder them

LIVE CLOSE TO NATURE.

They are not set for nought before thine eyes,
 They are not hieroglyphics which the wise
 Can scarce decipher—they have meanings clear
 That whoso will, may understand and hear,

They are for thee,
 Assuredly,

Soul primers—God in part made manifest
 Some other way, some other day, He will reveal the rest.

Two Ways of Love.

Dramatis Personæ.

NELLIE.

TOM (*her brother*).

ADRIENNE (*an heiress. Cousin to Tom and Nellie*).

SCENE I.

A balcony opening from a ballroom.

Time—after midnight.

NELLIE—

If I were not so modern! I am smit
 By sorrow, antique as the cruel plan
 That made a human heart so breakable
 And trusted it to chance's careless hands.

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

And my too modern spirit mocks, and says
"That men have died, and worms have eaten them,
But not for love." No! but for lack of it.
And yet the very blade that stabs so deep
And severs all the arteries of joy
Is joy itself! Bewildering! Oh my heart,
The glad heart of my girlhood, where art thou?
A thing so young and glad an hour ago!
Then time did not exist for me, nor death,
Nor any of those foolish, empty words
An hour ago! Yes! I was happy then.
The air was full of light, a dazzling sea
Where faces floated, and a mirror gave
One, happier than the rest, a look of me.
These saffron roses—are they still the same
I fastened with a diamond at my throat
An hour ago? The air was full of light,
And silver voices rang so melting sweet
From flute and violin and harp, that strings
Hid deep within my being, answered them
In thrilling cadences—an hour ago!

And Phillip passed me, and we looked and smiled,
I up into his eyes, he down to mine,
And suddenly, a tremor shook my heart.

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

The dove, that wrapped in happy slumber lies
In every woman's nature, fluttered wings
For instant flight, and through the intimate
And quiet corridor of every vein
The message of the gods was flashed in flame,
And then I knew I loved him. Long ago!
A whole long hour, when I was but a girl.
And when mine eyes became my own again
I lifted them to watch him as he went,
And saw him turn to where my cousin stood,
A lily in her glimmering silken robe,
Her face, set like a cameo, beneath
The dusky coronet of hair, her hand,
Unjewelled save with its own loveliness,
Outstretched in greeting. Adrienne!
I, watching, with my very soul aflame
With this new passion, saw their glances meet,
And knew, Oh! God, have pity! knew by all
The new-born intuitions of my heart,
By every nerve that quivered in response,
I knew they loved each other, and I think
I almost cried aloud as when a child
I cried in passionate amaze at pain.
For I was young, you see, an hour ago.

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

And then a wave of bitterest despair
Came whelming over me, and I was drowned.
The gay young Nellie that they knew was drowned
Before their eyes, and no one ever saw
How in the magic circle of that room
Ablaze with lights, and flooded with perfume,
A little human tragedy was played—
A girl's heart waked to love and struck to death
All in an unexpected moment, while
The tide of laughter, gaiety, and life
And music, all too sweet for such designs,
Swept on unheeding. Oh! an hour ago
I could have wept with any, silver drops
To sprinkle my emotions till they flowered
In pity or in sympathy, but now—
It seems so strange to think I cannot weep.
I surely am not I? Nellie! Yet they laugh
As usual when I say some daring thing,
And turn their platitudes to epigrams,
And still I bear my part, yet sometimes glance
In sudden terror at the lace that lies
Upon my breast to see if it be stained
With tell-tale crimson, for it seems, that when
One's heart is wounded, it should bleed, but no!

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

I see no sign, and I shall have to live
So many years, oh, heaven! so many years.
For death will not have time to think of me,
I am too young and strong. And though one's eyes
Can never weep, and though one's heart
Is sunk in misery, one will not die
But live and live. Oh, what am I to do?
For I love Phillip, who loves Adrienne,
For I love Phillip, who loves Adrienne.

And Adrienne has always been so rich—
So rich in beauty; perfect as a flower,
In colour and in contour is her face,
Deep velvet for her eyes, and shining coils
Of matchless lustre for her woman's crown,
A regal symmetry of line and form,
The rounded arm a miracle of grace,
And every gesture supple as the curve
Of willow wands assenting to the breeze.
And Adrienne has but to stretch her hand
And all the rarest flowers, the richest fruits
Of love and beauty, intellect and joy
Fall at her touch. Her well is fathomless,
Yet to my little cup she stoops and drains
The draught that is my life. Unconsciously!

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

For, royal as her beauty is the sweet
 White fabric of her soul, and richer far,
 Though heiress of her millions, is her heart
 In generosity, and kindliness.
 What can he do but love her, being made
 Of just such steel as such sweet magnets draw?
 He cannot choose but love her. Who am I
 That he should think of me? Nellie, gay
 And laughter-loving, not of stature fit
 To mate with such as Phillip. Ay! for me
 The little things of life, the worthy thoughts
 Of some respectable and harmless youth,
 The petty cares of home, the level path
 Of blameless mediocrity. But! listen, God!
 I cannot bear it! Give me something else
 To kill me quicker——

[*Enter Tom.*]

TOM—

Ah! Nellie! Come, 'tis late, and you are pale
 For all your triumphs. I have watched you, witch!
 And seen you pull the strings of all your beaux,
 A handful at a time. Such impudence
 In little girls, who should be safe asleep.

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

But, come. Is this your fan? 'Tis very late.
Make your adieux and let us get away.

[*Exit Tom and Nellie.*]

SCENE II.

Tom and Nellie, in their home, seated at dinner.

TOM—

Well! tell me of your day, Inscrutable!
What have you done? whom seen? and what remarked?
What sudden silence clogs my chatterbox?
Where have you been? What! Nowhere! Lucky
girl!
And visitors? whom have you had to-day?
A gasman, and a grocer. Well! Well! Well!
And so ennui has marked you for his own,
So young, and once so eloquent——

NELLIE—

Oh, Tom! do hush! How stifling hot it is!
No more—I cannot eat, it is too hot.
I wonder when they will be married, Tom?

TOM—

What! some engagement? Ah! we live again!
I really feared that something ailed you, child.

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

But still the ancient tonic works, I see.
The very name of matrimony stirs
The sluggish blood to vivid life again.
Who is it, Nellie? Let me hear the news.

NELLIE—

There is no news. You men are all so blind,
Why anyone could see that Adrienne——

TOM [*pausing with wineglass in his hand*]—

That Adrienne?

NELLIE—

That Adrienne will marry Phillip soon.
[*Tom drops wineglass with a crash.*]

TOM—

That Adrienne will marry Phillip soon?
What folly are you talking? Have you lost
Your wits for good? You must be crazy, girl.
[*Exit Tom.*]

NELLIE—

Why! Tom! What is it? Oh, poor boy! I said
That men are all so blind. Good heavens! and I,
With all my boasted seeing, never saw,

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

No, never dreamed for half an instant, that
 He, too, my darling brother, loved her too.
 And oh! the useless irony of it,
 The twisted tangle, every thought a knot,
 And every knot compounded of such pain,
 I cannot, cannot bear it!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Adrienne's sittingroom. Adrienne waiting. Enter Tom.

ADRIENNE—

I sent for you. I knew that you would come.
 I wished to tell you, Tom—won't you sit down?—
 What I intend to do. Perhaps you know—
 You surely must have seen that I—

TOM (*harshly*)—

What is it that you mean? You wish to say
 What Nellie, in some idiot mood, implied
 That you and Phillip, are, she said, in love—

ADRIENNE—

I mean to marry Phillip, that is all.
 But understand. I *mean to marry him!*

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

TOM—

Is this some joke? Or are you only mad?

ADRIENNE—

I may be mad, but I shall marry him.

TOM—

Never, while I am here above the ground
To stop it. Adrienne——

ADRIENNE—

I love him, Tom.

Just pause a moment, realise with me
The meaning of it. I, yes, Adrienne,
Even I—I love him, and I swear
As surely as I live, as this warm blood
Leaps to my cheek, that I shall marry him.

TOM—

You cannot marry him. You know——

ADRIENNE—

I know!

And do you think I am so poor a thing
That I shall stand abashed by such a bar?
An empty mockery! A pagan rite!
A shibboleth of words, as hollow as

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

The hearts that heard them. What a shadowy thing
 For barrier between my love and me!
 A marriage? That? A patter from a book,
 A fine-phrased mockery. Oh Heaven! and this
 Poor pallid ghost you raise to bid me stand——

TOM—

It was a marriage, legal, binding, fixed
 As firm as laws of God and man can bind.
 No sophistry can make it less——

ADRIENNE—

Oh, true!

For who can make of nothing even less?
 And it is nothing. Listen! Long ago—
 You know, perhaps, how long—for me the years
 Were petrified, they neither came nor went—
 But you, perhaps you lived, and you can say
 How long it is ago that I was young.
 Just seventeen! Think of it—a very child!
 As ignorant of evil as a flower,
 And quite as beautiful. Do you recall
 The look I wore? See here, this photograph—
 I keep it as the learned doctors keep
 Recovered relics of a bygone age.

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

It tells of prehistoric innocence,
And gaiety incredible! The smile
So merry-hearted. See! a dimple laughs
To greet the lovely curving of the lips;
And see, oh! see the white serenity,
The smooth and flawless beauty of the brow.
And that was Adrienne. You knew her. Ah!
Why should you wince? I face it every day,
This bright young innocence, and every day
I see the stain new fallen, every day
I know the horror indescribable
That came upon this unsuspecting soul.
For I was innocent! Then I awoke
To know myself a thing abhorred, and stained
A girl of seventeen, poor, unhappy child,
Who, when she stepped into the net outspread
My diabolic cunning, was as pure
Of every thought of sin as when she lay
A day-old infant in her Mother's arms.
And she, my Mother—ah! you think me hard
That even death cannot subdue my voice
To some inflection kindlier than this.
You shrink from me because I, standing here
A woman, and a daughter, cannot give

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

The poor defenceless dead her requiescat.
'Tis strange, unnatural. Yes, but not
Till death has claimed his own from me shall I
Forget that she, my Mother, saw in all
That awful trouble nothing but my guilt,
The one thing tangible. That she, whose heart
Should have become my haven, she of all
Who should have sheltered and have shielded me,
Was first to pass death sentence and condemn
As only your good women can condemn
"A fallen sister." I, her only child,
And fatherless, a girl as foully wronged
As ever, in this woman-wronging world,
Uplifted eyes of murdered innocence.
And I, her child, found only cruel scorn
And ready censure and an outraged pride
In place of mother-love. And then she stood
And coldly told me that my life was wrecked,
My future blasted, and my very self
A shuddering horror to her. Yet, she said,
One thing remained to me—to save her name
From public scandal—that at her behest
You, Tom, you, poor brave knight of courtesy,
Constrained by deep compassion and the call

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

Of highest chivalry that ever drove
 An honourable and romantic youth
 To fling his life quixotically away,
 That you had volunteered to marry me,
 To shield me from exposure, and across
 The naked, shivering spectre of my life
 Throw as a cloak your warm and sheltering name.
 And, dazed and helpless, stricken with despair,
 A graven image of sheer misery,
 And aged just seventeen! I married you
 At her command. Oh, Heaven! what a farce,
 A bride whose heart was dead before it lived.
 Whose brain was seared. Oh, Tom! Oh! generous
 heart!

What fatal instinct made you lend yourself
 To such a plan, so futile, and so wrong,
 As if an empty marriage could atone!
 As if two wrongs could ever make a right.
 A marriage—that! when scarcely had the words
 Been uttered than we parted, you and I,
 And, for long years were never face to face.
 For we, my frozen Mother and myself,
 Wandered in foreign countries year on year,

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

And fled like lepers from a face we knew,
Or might be known by, and in silence kept
Our secrets in the graveyards of our hearts.
I never used your name. Oh! bitter years
When by degrees I woke to life and saw
With comprehending eyes my own a wreck.
What need to tell you this? My Mother died,
The deadly silence that between us lay
Unbroken. Oh, the bitter years! Of you—
And of that empty marriage form that lay
Unknown and unacknowledged in the past—
I never thought. It was too poor a thing
To claim my mind that ever circled round
The plague spot in my life, and found such deeps
Of fruitless agony, as may, God grant,
No other woman plumb. Ten years had passed
Before I knew a moment's interlude
From this brain torture. Suddenly my heart
Sprang up among its ashes and I saw
Myself, a woman young and beautiful,
And very rich, and of a blameless fame.
And, lifting my bowed head again, I vowed
To live, and let my dead and sheeted past
Bury its dead.

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

And then I met my fate
In Phillip Stanhope, and I loved him. Tom!
Consider what it means that I, yes, I,
The woman who had died in grief and shame,
Was suddenly reborn, a ransomed soul.
I love him! God in Heaven! How the words
Ring through my senses like a battle cry.
I, starving, I, an outcast from Life's feast,
A pale ghost shivering without the pale
Of warm humanity. I love! I love!
And in my veins rich currents come and go,
And thoughts flash through me like the golden points
Of sunshafts breaking through a stormy pall.
Something sings here within my heart where all
Was silence, and upon its lifting wings
I rise to holy places, and I see
What never mortals saw before—a bloom,
A fragrance—a design in life. I love.
And Phillip loves me, pours about my life
The pure flame of his worship, saturates
My spirit with the flawless joy of his.
I am so happy—Tom—I almost faint
With thinking of it—and oh, Cousin, would——

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

TOM (*hoarsely*)—

It is a tale to move a heart of stone
 And mine, alas! is only made of flesh.
 How can I throw a shadow on your life,
 And darken it——

ADRIENNE—

You could not do it, Tom.

TOM—

And yet I must. For, listen, Adrienne,
 You cannot marry while I live. No! No!
 No casuistry can ever alter that.
 You are my wife——

ADRIENNE—

What! would you dare to hold
 That empty rite before me? Madness, Tom——

TOM—

Ay! madness truly, Adrienne. I know
 All you can argue; nothing alters this,
That you can never marry till this tie
Between our lives is broken. Either Death

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

Or some convenient substitute must cut
 The cord that binds us, or you never can
 Be wife to any man——

ADRIENNE— I'll call no death
 Nor other agency to set me free
 Who never has been bound. I will not stoop
 To subterfuge, but stand upon the right
 Of my humanity. Why! Tom, 'tis you
 And you alone who know this secret. See!
 You hold my future, helpless, in your hand.
 My heart cries out to you for happiness.
 Oh, cousin! Would you cut me off again
 From out the living?—bid me find my place
 Among the tombstones. See, I kneel to you.
[*Kneels.*]

TOM—

For God's sake, Adrienne! (No man was meant
 To suffer thus, and I can bear no more.)

[*Adrienne rises.*]

You do not know the cruelty of this.
 I love you, dear. Have loved you all your life.
 Although you never guessed. Yet it is so.

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

Your Mother, penetrating deeper knew,
 And when that terrible misfortune fell
 I leaped to help you, and my love made sweet
 And precious to me any aid I gave——

ADRIENNE—

Don't tell me—hush! Oh, hush! I cannot bear—
 I never knew—I did not guess, and now—
 Since so you love—— (Oh, what a selfish wretch
 To trade upon his sheer nobility!
 But I am desperate.) Forgive me, Tom,
 I am not worth it. Only let me live,
 Promise you will not raise a hand to stay
 My marriage—promise—promise—promise me!

TOM—

But, Adrienne! Be reasonable. Think!
 If you will only free yourself——

ADRIENNE—

And tell

My wretched secret to the world and so
 Let Phillip hear it? Oh! what utter fools
 Good men can be. I'd rather die to-night
 Than let a breath of such publicity
 Defile our love——

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

TOM—

How blind you women are!
 If you will sow this wind, you'll surely reap
 The whirlwind of destruction. Child! Be wise.
 Confide in Phillip. Let me legally
 Dissolve the marriage. Then your way is clear
 To happiness. Not otherwise.

ADRIENNE—

Oh, Heaven!

Tell Phillip? Drag the story out
 To be a nine-days' wonder? Truly, you are mad!
 When I am married I shall tell him all.
 I would not stoop to so deceive my love,
 The very soul of honour as he is.
 When we are man and wife, I'll tell him all
 And he shall with his gentle fingers heal
 My aching scars——

TOM—

Why! Adrienne!

It seems as if delirium spoke. Are you so young
 And ignorant of men that you should think
 They love like that? (Oh! but I am a brute
 To stab her while she bares her breast to me,

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

And yet I must.) I know your Phillip, know
 (How can I say so cruel-cold a thing?)
 'Twould kill his love, I tell you—I, who know.

ADRIENNE—

Alas! poor Tom, so ignorant of love,
 You never dreamed in all your narrow good
 Existence of the height, and depth, and breadth
 Of such a love as ours. 'Twould kill it? why!
 No thing that ever was conceived in thought
 By any human brain could touch our love.

TOM—

Men are not made like that.

ADRIENNE—

And yet you loved!

TOM—

'Tis meet to mock a love so poor as mine,
 That lives and flourishes on its own death.
 I am indeed a travesty of love,
 But you shall hear, for once, my passion speak
 That has so long been so ignobly dumb.
 Always, since you were little, I had watched

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

The blossom of your life, and every day
Cared more, and as your beauty grew, it lit
A flame within me that shall never die.
I knew you were indifferent. Yet I dreamed—
All fools may dream—of teaching you some day
My way of love, and when the trouble came
My heart was burnt with pity and revenge.
Your Mother used the pity, the revenge
She would not let me taste, for fear it should
Reflect on her. Yet all men love revenge—
Why should they not? Instead of it I threw
My manhood in the gulf that threatened you,
And all in vain—ay! truly as you say,
A needless thing. Yet in my darkest hour
It has been like a muted chord of joy
Singing amid the emptiness of life,
And twice I went half way across the world
On the excuse of business just to see
If time would turn your tragic eyes to me.

ADRIENNE—

Oh, Tom! I never guessed, I truly thought
It was to talk of legal things you came.
My heart was dead. I did not even know
That other hearts were living.

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

TOM—

I know.

I knew it then, and so I never spoke.
 I could have claimed you—yes, make no mistake,
 I could have claimed you—and there were wild hours—
 But let it pass. But now, think, Adrienne,
 Your lover Phillip is my dearest friend,
 My more than brother, knit to me with ties
 That every man holds sacred, and you ask
 That I shall thus deliberately wound
 And stab his honour. Oh! my dear, be just,
 How can I do my friend this coward wrong?

ADRIENNE—

Tom, all these years you suffered, loving me,
 All your great sacrifices, and the gifts
 Of name, and youth, and happiness you gave
 I take; great gifts for any man to give
 And any woman take, yet not enough
 To meet my needs. Give me your honour too.
 Add that bright thing to crown the glittering heap
 And buy me happiness. Oh, cousin, if——

TOM—

No more, great God! no more! Oh! woman, dear,
 These two white hands, these supplicating eyes,

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

This fatal beauty that is not for me,
 These have invaded and usurped my life.
 I thought to keep, amid the wreck of joy,
 The dear sharp pang of honour in my breast,
 The right to walk with lifted head, and look
 My fellows in the face. This, too, I yield.
 Now nothing counts. And yet it will not win
 You happiness. I speak of what I know.
 If you must do this thrice-accursed thing,
 I ask, as one in truth who has no claim,
 Whose only rôle is giving, if you must
 Then do it wholly. Keep your secret close
 As I shall too, inviolate as death.

ADRIENNE—

No! No! It is your ignorance that speaks.
 I could not live with such a ghost unlaid.
 And I shall tell him and we too shall prove
 The true dimensions of the power of love——

TOM—

You go to ruin, girl, as surely as——

ADRIENNE—

Oh! not so sadly, cousin. Let us part
 With rosier visions. Ruin is an old

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

And too familiar bogey now to fright
 My seasoned spirit. Let me go from you
 With some such careless phrases of farewell
 As ordinary women often hear.
 For I have left that gloomy pedestal
 Of misery unique, and now am just
 An ordinary woman. Tom! you have
 Poured from your empty hands so full a flood
 Of living joy into my heart that I——
 Look at me, cousin, look into my eyes,
 And read your thanks, a happy woman's eyes.

TOM—

I cannot listen, Adrienne. Farewell.

[*Exit Tom.*]

SCENE III.

A Month Later.

Sitting-room of Tom's house. Nellie seated, reading.

Enter Tom.

NELLIE—

You look so tired, Tom. It seems to me
 You need a change. Could you not get away?
 You work too hard, you're looking like a ghost.
 Oh! by the way, I had a note to-day

TWO WAYS OF LOVE.

From Adrienne. They're in the Mountains now,
 And it is rather cold, she says, but bright
 And very pleasant. Phillip finds, she says,
 Some first-rate shooting in the neighbourhood
 And is in splendid health. A week to-day
 Since they were married, and——

[Telephone rings. Nellie answers.]

NELLIE—

Yes, 228—yes—speaking—yes, I'll wait.

[Turns to Tom.]

It's Adrienne's maid, Annette, who wants to speak.
 Some one rang up for her. Oh! here she is.
 What? What! No! No! it cannot be——

*[Drops receiver and flings up her hands. Tom
 has risen in agitation.]*

NELLIE—

Phillip is dead. He shot himself to-day.
 Oh, Tom! Oh, Tom! Oh, Adrienne——

TOM *[taking receiver]*—

So soon! Oh, God! so soon, so soon.

THE END.

An Opal.

I have a magic flower that knoweth not to fade,
 Rosily it blossoms through the winter undismayed,
 Each fairy petal keeps its satin sheen,
 And garners sunshine where no sun has been.
 The glory of uncounted summer days
 Lies at its core, and all the silver rays
 That moons have lavished on uncharted seas
 Fill it with glimmering mysteries.

My magic flower, unfed by air or rain,
 Hath in it glamours from a purple plain
 Drenched in still twilight and the velvet deeps
 Of rich sky spaces ere the first star peeps.
 Green of dim forests, and dew-nurtured glades,
 Stabbed by the noonday sun's imperial blades,
 And steel-blue gleams from bergs that silent ride
 In white enchantment the Antarctic tide.

A crystal chalice, filled with tinted wine,
 Whose every bubble sparkles with a new design,
 A dream of colour in a stone arrested
 And with a lovely permanence invested.

AN OPAL.

A wondrous thought, that in primeval gloom
Burst, like a blossom, into sudden bloom,
A prophet's instinct, that 'mid chaos knew
How suns would kiss a future drop of dew.

A need of light, which, focussed in the dark,
Lit by suggestion this miraculous spark,
Within whose matrix of strange fibres spun
Is stored the secret essence of the sun.
Was it some tincture ignorantly spilled
Into earth's crucible? or did a skilled
Alchemist pity on the fused mass take
And, smiling, add it for its beauty's sake?

Mysterious as the spiritual flowers that flame
Through human souls and passionately claim
Kinship with beauty, incoherent as the gleams
Of intuition in a poet's dreams,
Yet eloquent of an unfailing source.
And could we trace the deeply hidden course
Of the beautiful to beauty, we might find
The meaning of an opal and a human mind.

In a Railway Carriage.

The hills dance in a circle,
The wide plain swiftly turns,
Fences flit by, the wheeling sky
A new rotation learns.

Dim roadways, dust-enshrouded,
Like pallid ribands run,
And in and out a cloudy rout
Pirouettes the sun.

The wires, with elfin swiftness,
Now soar, now sink, now soar,
Till sight with dizzy faintness
Can follow them no more.

Far hills are now behind us,
And streams and bridges fade,
Distance is distanced, and my heart
Is harassed and afraid,

For, through the clang and clamour
Of sounds that sink and swell,
One word is beating on my brain—
Farewell! farewell! farewell!

IN A RAILWAY CARRIAGE.

And every wheel revolving
Crushes my peace of mind,
And every league we traverse
Leaves happiness behind.

No goal can compensate me,
While, like a fatal knell,
Those iron voices harshly cry—
Farewell! farewell! farewell!

Paths of Peace.

I know the ways are just as sweet
With quaker-grass and clover,
I know the turf beneath my feet
Is velvet, daisied over.
The She-oaks murmur overhead,
The sweet bush scents assail me,
But something in my heart is dead,
And hope and courage fail me.

PATHS OF PEACE.

The night has still her golden eyes,
The sunset tints are splendid,
But in my heart a shadow lies,
Its happiness is ended.
I know the world is just the same,
Its beauty still undaunted,
I, only I, must take the blame
That I am spectre-haunted.

For beauty lieth not apart,
A thing of outward seeing,
But springeth up within the heart,
Bound in its inmost being.
And peace, though she may range and roam
Where'er her instinct leads her,
Will build a nest and make a home
In every heart that needs her,

If there be room, for though they lie
So soft you scarce can view them,
The portals must be wide and high
That let her pinions through them.

God Knows Why.

God knows why
He planted cruel thorns about
The fragrance of the rose.
So ask me not; my own sad doubt
Doubts only not
God knows.

God knows why
He sowed His rarest jewels deep
In earth's unlovely clay,
And to the lowest life that lives
Gave all His pearls away.
I know not—I—
But God knows why.

God knows why
He linked His holiest mystery
To instincts like the brutes;
And through God-given passions, He
Our God-likeness refutes.
I know not—I—
But surely—oh! but surely
God knows why.

A Coast.

I have pledged thee, O! exquisite maiden!
 In beakers brimmed high with delight,
 I have named thee when voices, love-laden,
 Rang sweet through a passionate night;
 And when incense from altars ascended
 In the gloom of a sanctified place,
 I have offered oblation more splendid—
 The fame of thy beautiful face.

I shall bear in a casket deep hidden,
 A casket framed out of my heart,
 The thought of thy sweetness forbidden,
 For dearer than honour thou art.
 Ay! dearer than honour, and fairer,
 My love these poor potions disdains,
 I shall pledge thee in vintages rarer—
 The warm blood that flows in my veins.

While others, made free of thy beauty,
 May serve thee where honours are rife,
 I, fettered to pitiless duty,
 Take this, the red wine of my life,

A TOAST.

With all its dear memories laden,
 With all of my heart that is worth,
 And pledge thee, O! exquisite maiden,
 Then dash the poor goblet to earth,
 To shatter in pieces and perish,
 Yet sacred for ever to be,
 For each broken fragment shall cherish
 A deathless remembrance of thee.

A Query.

I sowed the desert with my tears,
 Some hidden good was in it,
 For at my feet a garden sprang,
 • Full-blossomed in a minute.

The great magnolia's creamy cups
 Poured forth their passion fumes,
 And ruddily—above the grass—
 Shone tall carnation blooms.

A QUERY.

A lily, with an eastern look,
 Lighted her silver flame,
 And purely, like our better thoughts,
 White clover blossoms came.

So drear a place! so sad a rain!
 Yet such sweet harvest granted,
 When seeds of beauty lie thus hid,
 Whose was the hand that planted?

A Trois Temps.

HE—

When, lightly leaning on my arm, you glide,
 Your feet motived to music, and the spell
 Of these harmonious cadences across
 Us woven, threadlike, lacing you to me,
 My human needs are satisfied, no more
 I ask of Time or Circumstance; the warmth
 Of Summer at my heart makes every thought
 A blossom, with the germ of richer life
 Shut fast within it, and a rosy light
 Lit by your nearness sets my eager soul

A TROIS TEMPS.

To shining like a lamp against the dark
 Of other, poorer peoples' happiness,
 And every sense grown keener to demand
 Its rights, and wise enough to know them, halt,
 Fullfed, and languorously cries "Content!"

SHE—

I, too, have found my home, at last, 'tis here
 Against your sheltering shoulder. All my world
 So large, so limitless, so full of every good
 Lies yet within the circle of your arm.
 Then, where is Heaven? Wherefore do they seek
 With lifted eyes afar, when all the time
 It lies so near, all just within your arm.

HE—

My love for you is not an alien thing,
 An after-thought of God's giving to life
 A rich addendum. You to me are not
 A flower that I might pluck to glut mine eye
 With its entrancing beauty, nor a gem
 To set about with earven gold and wear
 To wake the envy of a watching world,
 Upon my breast. You are to me as air,

A TROIS TEMPS.

The means whereby I live. My need of you
 Is just my need of life; it is the cry
 Of Nature's self, instinctive as the beat
 Of heart's blood in my veins. You are my right
 As power to breathe, and room to stand, and share
 Of wind and sunshine, and the generous
 Clear promises of midnight skies are mine,
 By royal right of human heritage.
 When you are here I am myself, complete,
 No more, not added to, but just myself
 As Nature planned—a finished man; and yet
 To all the world I am but one among
 The common throng about you, have no claim,
 Beyond the empty courtesies of life,
 Upon your time. To even hold you thus,
 To tell you what I tell, to need your love
 Is breaking of the law. Oh! one could laugh
 At such a travesty—the law! the law!—
 A gibbering skeleton that men have set
 Upon an iron pedestal to fright
 Their phantom consciences.—The law! the law!
 I am the law unto myself. I claim
 By right of my humanity, by God's own—

A TROIS TEMPS.

SHE—

Hush, oh, hush! See, I am here.
 Remember nothing else; it is enough.
 My hand is in your own. Let that suffice.
 Oh! see, my hand is in your own, and let
 The rich entreaty of the music sweep
 Our spirits to as rhythmical a chord
 As this our feet have found. Ah! when your arm
 Is round me, 'tis as though a rampart stood
 About my soul, and fenced its rapture in.
 Oh! only think of this.

HE—

Your voice infects my blood; it is a balm
 That anodynes that gaping wound—my life;
 It lulls the sobbing of my passions as
 The mother-hand that soothes, with magic touch,
 An infant's crying. I am glad to cry
 Because it brings the healing of your voice.
 But—Heaven help us! this we linger in,
 This paradise of fools——

SHE—

Yet still a paradise——

A TROIS TEMPS.

HE—

And still a fool's. Why should I bear it? Why?
I can endure no more. This one sweet span,
This little moment, plucked from out the great
Blank desert of my days, this tiny spark
Of time that burns so quickly to its dark
Effacement, this one happy moment when
The fetish law allows me thus to hold
You in my arms, and thus to clasp your hand,
And thus to draw your slender body close
Until I feel the beating of the heart
That times my own, and mark the mystery
Of half-hid shoulders gleaming amid lace,
And little wayward curls blown here and there
About the milk-white curving of your throat,
This little moment, trembling with the sheer
Delight of being—this is all, is all
That I may dare to claim from out your life,
This momentary dance, when, to the beat
Of low, impassioned music, and the hum
Of vapid voices, and the silken sweep
Of trailing gowns, I hold you lightly thus
And school my face to vacancy, and train
My heart's-ery to the level tones required

A TROIS TEMPS.

From bondslaves of the law, then yield you up
To other arms, to those that—never more!
I shall not give you up. Before them all,
This gaping throng, the man whose name you bear,
And every other man who walks the earth,
I'll claim mine own. When once this waltz is done
I'll keep you in my arms—before them all—
And kiss you on the lips, and cry aloud—
“This woman is my own, is mine, is mine!”
And kiss your lips again, and holding you
Here close against my breast, defy them all,
And bid them come and take you. Ay, and fight
Them singly, or together press and drive
And strike and slay them with this hand of mine
That hath not strength of ten right hands for nought!
And then—before them all—I'll bear you off,
Out from the grinning throng, the lights, the hum
Of rapid voices, out into the dim,
Mysterious starlight, clean with solitude
And merciful with silence. I am sick—
Oh! sick and senseless with this beating down,
And hemming in, and choking back of all
The sources of my life. Why was I made
A giant among men, with strength, and wealth,

A TROIS TEMPS.

And every good a sneering Fate could pour
 From brimming hands, but one—the only one—
 A slip of womanhood with burnished hair
 And frightened eyes, and little hands that cling
 In vain entreaty—yes—in *vain*, I said.
 No! No! I am not drunk, save with excess
 Of abstinence, a pale and fumeless wine!
 Too long I have been sane, and let my life
 Ooze out at every moment and enrich
 The swollen flood of Hades with the drops
 Of my vicarious anguish. Let me now
 Be mad for preference. Ay! be mad, and let
 The savage in me break his chains, and send
 His war-cry pealing through this feeble din,
 And fight as savages can fight, and win,
 For—little trembling one—I'll fight to win
 Because I fight for you—

SHE—

Oh hush! oh hush! My life is in your hand,
 Do not destroy it idly. Only think
 One moment what it means to me who fight
 Always, alone, unaided. Will you crush
 My soul to free my body? Lift the gyves

A TROIS TEMPS.

From wrist to spirit and endure a grief
 That time may slay, with immortality?
 When, years ago, I blindly gave my life
 Into another's keeping, I withheld
 No vestige of my honour. It is his
 Whose name I bear. Condemn me not to stain
 A life that holds itself so proud and high.
 Through all the madness of this love of ours
 Which, like a flood, has whelmed my very soul
 In dark, unfathomed waters, I have held—
 As drowning wretches lift above the waves
 A treasure that they hold more dear than life—
 Unstained, his honour. 'Tis an empty thing
 To save for him from out the tide that swept
 My heart and all its passions to your feet,
 Yet his, and saved, God knows at what a cost!
 And would you make, by one mad, reckless word,
 This dear-bought relie of my shattered joy
 A byword for the world's base feet to tread
 And trample into filthiness—

HE—

Mere sophistry!

Since he has never held your love, what use
 To cherish so its shadow? As we stand

A TROIS TEMPS.

We all are fed with shadows, for his share
 The husks of honour, yours the phantom fruit
 That duty bears upon its thorny boughs,
 And mine, the poisoned bread of jealousy;
 And at this goodly feast we sit, like ghouls,
 And fatten our despair. But now no more
 Shall I fold hands and say my humble grace
 Before such meat. Think not of honour, dear,
 What is it, weighed beside our love——

SHE—

But you forget that he—he also loves,
 Unconscious of his loss. He loves me, too,
 And he at least is happy. Must we then
 Build up our joy upon the wreck of his?
 Is this the lore our love reveals to us?
 Vain dream! We might as surely hope to snatch,
 With greedy fingers, from the murky cloud,
 The vaporous beauty of the rainbow arch
 As pluck our happiness from deeds like this.
 Besides, oh! dearest, have you never felt
 That this dear love of ours is as the risen
 Transfigured soul of our deep-buried selves,

A TROIS TEMPS.

And only lives because of Death's release,
The death of earthly satisfactions and——

HE—

I almost could believe you do not know
What loving means! Yet, no! Forgive me, dear.
Some other time I'll follow you, and feel
What you would have me feel, but now my soul,
And mind, and spirit are grown sick and numb,
And I am nothing but a man, not dead,
Nor risen, nor transfigured—just a man
Alive and loving you, whose pulses beat
Loud drums of revolution, whose hot blood
Is surging through his veins like liquid fire,
Whose heart is thundering out with every throb
The death-knell of delay. In vain you hold
His happiness before mine eyes a thing
Fenced round and sacred. Let him feel the edge
Of this keen tooth that gnaws into my life.
Because he loves you is no reason why
My hand should stay from smiting, though 'tis true
That if he had not loved you well his life
Had long ago paid forfeit. I'd have stamped
The breath from out his body, as I tread

A TROIS TEMPS.

Upon a noxious insect, but that he
 Has wit to love you as becomes a man.
 No! do not turn away, nor hide your eyes.
 I still am I, though roused at last to feel
 My strength and use——

SHE—

I have a child——

HE—

His child——

SHE—

My child—a little girl, so small, so sweet,
 Just four years old, with little, clustering curls
 The colour of my own, and tiny hands
 That lie upon my heartstrings. Part of me—
 The purer part she is. The lovely soul
 Is stainless; and—at night—I pray—no spot
 May ever touch her—for her sake I ask,
 For her—my little child——

HE—

*

*

*

*

The waltz is over! 'Twas a dance of death!
 I see your husband waiting. Go to him!

Emancipation.

At last I free my spirit from your sweetness
And purge my heart of your so potent spell,
No cobweb fancies linger, with completeness
I've conquered all the arts your eyes compel.

No magic lies for me in your blue glances,
No subtle music lures me when you speak,
No more the blood through throbbing pulses dances
Because an eyelash trembles on your cheek.

Yes, I am free! And marble is not colder
To sunlight than my heart in its new calm.
Yes, I am free—but do not touch my shoulder
Nor lay in mine a little roseleaf palm.
And—*weeping?* Dearest, I am only free
To seek again such sweet captivity.

A Song.

There's a ripple on the sapphire seas far in the dreaming
 west
 Where the palpitating sun-heart has so lately burned and
 pressed,
 And the silver-winged wind-maidens, they are talking in
 their sleep;
 And from out their tresses' shimmering folds their gleam-
 ing shoulders peep.
 Sleep, wind-maidens! Murmur drowsily,
 For swiftly through the westward ways my dream-ship
 comes to me.

There's a purple space of silence where the golden star-
 eyes shine,
 And like lovers deeply dutiful, they kneel in gallant
 line,
 And with fiery fingers spangle evening's trailing primrose
 gown
 Till she bids them rise up knighted by her shadow-sword
 and crown.
 Watch, true lovers! with your golden eyes,
 And guide and guard my dream-ship as she swiftly home-
 ward flies.

A SONG.

There's a tender tone of music waking somewhere in the
 world,
 And upon its fairy cadences my soul is lightly whirled;
 But a passion of impatience flashes through me like a
 fire,
 And thrills me like the wooing winds that kiss a waiting
 lyre.

Sing, glad lyre! Waiting days are past,
 For in the harbour of my heart my dream-ship lies at last.

On the Landing.

It was such a trifle, how could he guess
 Such issues were in it? A moment, or less,
 He loitered to chat with Mackenzie and Hall,
 And time passes quickly, you know, at a ball.
 She had said, "I will be ready at ten,"
 And he had stayed gossiping there with the men.
 Flame was not fit for the hurdles, they said,
 And he had a right to make sure on that head,
 Seeing that Flame was his pick of the lot,
 And stood in to win him a nice little pot.

ON THE LANDING.

If Flame had gone limping when on his last spin,
'Twas time that he started to draw his horns in;
So he just stopped to listen a moment, no more,
And forgot altogether to wait at the door.

She stood on the landing; the shadows were deep,
Some great yellow roses had fallen asleep,
And drooped in their vases; the lights were all low,
Why was he late when she wanted to go?
The music came faintly the silence along,
Now rising, now falling, now soft, and now strong.
Outside lay the starlight mysteriously fair,
And someone was mounting the carpeted stair.
Someone who would not have left her to wait
Alone on a landing because he was late;
Someone whose will had once moulded her own,
Who sweet vanished dreams of her dead past had
 known,
But mists had arisen and blinded love's eyes,
And now she had woven new bonds and new ties,
For life must be lived though its sweetness is fled,
"To-morrow my vows will be spoken," she said.
"Oh! why has he come to awaken the past?
Why has he sought me, and found me at last?"

ON THE LANDING.

She trembled, a sudden, rich flush overspread
The soft oval cheek, then as suddenly fled.
She shrank into shadow, perhaps he would pass,
He might not have seen her—perhaps he——alas!
His strong stride was leaping the stairs at a bound,
She felt his glance on her, she did not turn round.
She pulled her soft bernouse close up round her face,
He surely would pass such a shadowy place!
But no, he was standing beside her; a pause,
And silence. She felt as one sinking, because
The firm earth was slipping away from her feet,
In the hush and the stillness she heard her heart beat;
She cried, with a voiceless but passionate prayer,
For help and deliverance, the soft, languid air
Came back to her empty, her desperate need
Shone out in the eyes she had lifted to plead,
They met his impassioned and masterful glance
That silenced her conscience as if by a trance.
His arm was about her, he bent his head low
With a gesture she knew—ay—and loved long ago;
And his voice was a spell. "Come, sweetheart!" Ah, me!
The slender hands made one attempt to be free,
The sweet, grey eyes lifted protested in vain—
Poor, sweet eyes! that cannot leave his eyes again.

ON THE LANDING.

Soft steps on the staircase—two shadows that pass,
Scarce ruffling the dewdrops that lie on the grass;
A white bernouse lying forlorn on the stair,
A sad, little idyl thus improvised there.

And Flame was a moral—ah! doubtless; but then
'Twas a pity he stayed there to talk with the men.
He won all his wagers, he hated to lose,
But somehow the sight of a soft, white bernouse
Had power to unnerve him and stab him with pain,
And set his strong fingers aquake on the rein;
And even when Flame passed the post by a head,
He hadn't a smile—at least, so the men said.

To a Piccolo.

You may hear, when, with sharp silver shuttles of
 light,
 The moonbeams are weaving a web in the night
 To tangle the tresses of mermaidens sleeping,
 A sudden, soft voice through the warm silence sweeping
 In pure, liquid cadence, unfettered by words,
 'Tis a piccolo singing,
 Across the night flinging
 A musical mingling of waters and birds.

When the violin sings, there come, freighted with fire,
 Strange voices that waken our highest desire,
 We dream like a prophet; we open the portals
 That hide the sublime from the vision of mortals,
 We are burnt with its beauty; eternity rolls
 Before us, and haunts us,
 And beckons and taunts us,
 And wakes a divine discontent in our souls.

And the harp, with its love-laden, vibrating tone,
 Hath meanings as powerful and deep of its own.
 We love, and are filled by the glory and splendour
 Of soft-smitten strings inexpressibly tender,

TO A PICCOLO.

Entreating with pauses pathetic as prayer,
 And ever renewing
 Its exquisite wooing
 In melting pulsations of hope and despair,

But the piccolo sings with the sweet, wanton, wild,
 Shadowless glee of a little glad child,
 Unconscious of genius or passion, its singing
 Is like runnels of water through pearly caves ringing,
 It curves into ripples that break and rebound,
 Now rising, now falling,
 Now merrily calling,
 In the cheek of the night 'tis a dimple of sound.

It runs, like the slight silver thread of a stream
 That leaps with a flash and an opaline gleam,
 Over waters whose turbulent shadowy places
 Hold secrets deep down in their ebon embraces,
 It is glad in itself, like the blossoms that wave
 In warm, lissom whiteness,
 Undimmed in their brightness
 Above a bride's smile, or the turf of a grave.

TO A PICCOLO.

Then pipe on, sweet piccolo! thou whom I love,
 Coo in thy silver-soft throat like a dove,
 Murmur like airs through sea-dreaming shells stealing,
 Then chime out like fairy bells suddenly pealing,
 And through all soft laughter entrancingly twine,
 Pipe on, little rebel,
 In exquisite treble
 And teach our dull spirits the magic of thine.

The Country Calls Me.

The country calls me,
 Not the town,
 Where all day long
 The people throng
 And myriad feet
 Impatient beat
 An endless pattern on the street.
 They come, they go,
 How can one know
 From whence or why
 They hurry by?

THE COUNTRY CALLS ME.

They go, they come,
And still the hum
Assaults mine ear.
I hear, I hear
Half-strangled notes
From human throats,
God help them! What is it they say?
And 'mid the roar
I hear the sore
Sore weeping of down-trodden lives,
And worse, ah worse!
I feel the curse
Of vice, exultant as it thrives,
And how am I
To crush it—I,
Whose instinct is to turn and fly?

Alas! the town,
As up and down
It passes, hurrying to its goal,
Is treading, treading, treading on my soul.
The country calls me,
But the town, the town appals me.
The country calls me.

THE COUNTRY CALLS ME.

I hear her calling
From far, from far,
Across the blue of the rolling plain
Where the heat-haze shimmers like golden rain,
In silver tones from the hidden creek
Where a bell-bird is dipping his eager beak,
And in whispers, soft as kisses,
From the gorge where the pine grows straight and tall
And the fearless fronds of fern-trees fall
O'er the lips of precipices,
From the wide, sweet breath of her dusky dells
Where a curlew ringeth her nightly knells,
From out of her great, sad, brooding heart
Where never man hath lot or part,
From the wind, from the cloud, from the leafless tree,
From the desert sands where no footprints be,
From her solitude and her mystery
The country calls me.

At Sunset.

A glory of red and yellow!
 A splendour of grey and pink!
 We have seen many sunsets, Emily,
 But never a fairer, I think.

See by the golden gateway
 Pillars of opal stand,
 Mark what a spell of silence
 Lies on the listening land.

See through the parted branches
 And glimmering trunks of trees,
 An ocean of amber tintings
 Melts into pale green seas.

And far on the dim horizon
 Shadowy hill-points rise
 Like dark blue tents that a giant
 Rears 'neath the sunset skies.

List to the silence, Emily!
 Solemn, profound, complete,
 For the thick green turf beneath us
 Muffles the sound of our feet.

AT SUNSET.

Surely the green pastures, Emily,
Of which the old Psalmist tells
Had just this same vivid verdure
And just these same clover-sweet smells.

Surely his dream of still waters
Was like this reed-fringed lagoon
That lies 'mid the shadows, awaiting
The first silver shafts of the moon.

And seeing the beauty, Emily,
And knowing the world so fair,
It seems like an evil vision—
The real hard world of care.

The real hard world of sorrow,
The merciless flight of the years,
Lit by the flame of passion,
Quenched by the dew of tears.

Memory's arrows are blunted,
They lose their power to sting,
Regret, like a brooding night-bird,
Folds up her sombre wing.

AT SUNSET.

What if this life is fleeting?
What if its joys are dross?
Shall we grow rich by slowly
Counting its gain and loss?

Surely we'll find repayment
In joys that can cost us nought,
Not a king nor a sage can rob us
Of the sunset gold we have caught.

Take what the gods have sent us,
Skies like a fairy dream,
Heed not old words of wisdom,
Things shall be what they seem.

Friends *shall* be true and trusty,
Love *shall* be without end,
And we shall find in each other
Happiness still, my friend.

You know of old, dead stories,
You know of dreams long past;
Love may be false and fleeting,
But yours and mine shall last.

AT SUNSET.

You start and you tremble, Emily,
At sudden, wild shrieks overhead—
Only a cockatoo flying,
With wide, white wings outspread.

Then, perched on the highest gum tree,
Outlined by the glowing west,
You will see a curving pinion
And an upright, yellow crest.

Many a time, my Emily,
We have watched the daylight fade
Till, softly, evening wrapped us
In cool, grey swathes of shade.

Never a friend like you, Emily,
Never a heart so true,
Not all the wise men of the east, dear,
Were half so wise as you.

A man may be glum or merry,
Or foolish or overwise,
But with all his moods and tenses
You silently sympathise.

AT SUNSET.

And whenever my heart grows bitter
 And cries for the sweet, old days,
 I come to you, and at sunset
 We wander by dim, green ways.

Friendship may be only a myth, dear,
 Love may be nought but a snare,
 But you're a reality, Emily—
 My little, brown, thoroughbred mare.

Might is Right.

There ran a whisper through the nodding grass—
 "Along this upland she will surely pass,"
 There rose a murmur in the sheoak glade—
 "Beneath us she may haply pause for shade,"
 And sweet epacris blushed a lovelier red,
 "Perhaps she'll stoop and gather me," it said,
 But one warm zephyr from the ardent south
 Said boldly—"I shall kiss her on the mouth."
 But I, alas! no happy grass am I
 To feel her footstep as she passes by,

MIGHT IS RIGHT.

No tree to shield her, no sweet woodland flower
 To lie upon her bosom for an hour.
 Then must I like the breeze grow bold and take
 Her heart itself, and might my right shall make.

Lullaby.

Lulla—lulla—bye—oh!
 Shut that little eye oh!
 Tuck that little drowsy head into its little nest.
 Lulla—lulla—bye—oh!
 Baby go to bye oh!
 Of all the pleasant things I know, sure slumber is the
 best.

Lulla—lulla—lay—oh!
 Where's the yellow day oh?
 Gone to sleep upon its rosy pillows in the west.
 Lulla—lulla—lay—oh!
 Baby knows the way oh!
 That leads along a dreamy path into a land of rest.

LULLABY.

Lulla—lulla—bye—oh!

Mother still is nigh oh!

Mother's song is just a prayer to Heaven's high gate
addressed.

Lulla—lulla—bye—oh!

May God hear her cry oh!

And keep the little soul for ever innocent and blest.

The Fairies' Cave.

Lane Cove River, New South Wales.

The little waves have dropped to sleep,

There is no wind to wake them,

The sands are buried far and deep

In tides that will forsake them,

And thro' long, limpid seas of light

The star-eyes glimmer, large and bright.

Across the emerald floors of moss

That cling about the ledges,

And with their velvet touch emboss

The rock's wave-fretted edges,

THE FAIRIES' CAVE.

There flit and flutter fairy feet
That dance in measures strange and sweet.

A little chamber hollowed deep
Within a wind-wracked boulder—
This is the haunt the fairies keep
When summer nights grow colder,
And ferny dells, deep drenched with dew,
Would soak their silken slippers through.

But in this cave, whose carven walls
Wear tints of tender yellow,
The starlight, softly filtered, falls
In floods of radiance mellow,
And through embrasured windows pass
Soft airs from leagues of flowering grass.

The floor is swept, and up and down
With silver sand is sifted,
And sweet Titania's amber gown
Needs scarcely to be lifted,
Her footsteps leave no deeper trace
Than kisses on an infant's face.

THE FAIRIES' CAVE.

And through the portals, when a bell
In some far, fairy steeple
Rings out in liquid notes to tell
The hour to elfin people,
Then do they come in happy troops
And gather gaily into groups.

And one has woven a diadem
Of dewdrops strung together,
She sits a-swinging on a stem
Of purple-petalled heather,
And one has stolen a cobweb thread
Wherewith to veil her dainty head.

And here Euterpe, wondrous fair,
With some strange glamour gleaming
Amid the lilies in her hair,
Doth often loiter, dreaming,
And through the starlight, soft and mute,
Lets loose the music of her lute;

For well she loves to leave the high,
Proud courts of Jove's dominions,
And float through azure depths of sky
On undulating pinions,

THE FAIRIES' CAVE.

To weave, with her white, goddess hand,
Sweet melodies for fairy-land;

For, in the blue fire of her eyes,
A shadow groweth deeper
As she doth slowly realise

That mortals cannot keep her,
In these cold modern days that come
Her voice and lute grow surely dumb.

For who of us can learn her ways,
Here in the world's loud clamour,
When we would fain repeat her lays,
We fail with feeble stammer,
And sweet Euterpe's eyes are wet
That we can thus her voice forget.

But ah! the little fairy folk
Are gay and glad for ever,
They never feel the crushing yoke
Of life and life's endeavour,
Their little feet are light for aye
To dance beneath the moon's white ray.

THE FAIRIES' CAVE.

Where sweet epacris blushes red,
 'Mid wild clematis tangles,
They dance, and dance, with airy tread
 Among the starlight spangles;
The songs they sing are never sung,
They love, and are for ever young.

And here Euterpe comes, and pours
 The pent flood of her singing
Till all the dreamy, drowsy shores
 With melody are ringing,
And here in flower-decked elfin throngs
She finds an echo for her songs.

Retribution.

I sought—I—in my gown of silk
 For a blossom that I might wear,
Dew-wet lilies as white as milk,
 Should I twine them in my hair?
But the pallor that lay on their ivory tips
Was the hue that flashed to thy stern shut lips

RETRIBUTION.

When I wrenched our hands apart,
And I turned away, with a sob in my throat,
For out from the petals there seemed to float
The wraith of thy wounded heart.

Then I turned, and my smile came back again
As I plucked me a yellow rose,
No ghostly phantom of buried pain
Could its sun-kissed leaves enclose,
But it stabbed me deep, for its yellow gloss
Was the same rich hue as the golden dross
With which my soul was bought,
And I crushed it under a passionate heel
As a loathly thing that should know and feel
The evil it had wrought.

Then I ran—I—in the dewy night
And I sought some sweet, wild thing—
Some wayside blossom, frail and bright,
That could not hold a sting.
And mine eyes were dim, for my tears fell fast,
But I gathered a fair field-flower at last,
And my heart within was hot
As I trembling drew to the lighted room,
A ghost looked out from the turquoise bloom—
I had plucked a forget-me-not!

Sydney in July.

The clouds have wept their great hearts out,
The westerly is dead,
Each night the world's wide hearthstone glows
With embers, grey and red;
The sun, abashed, rides proud and high
Nor tries his wooing ways to try
On Sydney in July.

A cold, salt air sweeps through the Heads
Along the waterways,
And shores and ships and quays are wrapped
In soft grey blotting haze.
A breath of violets mingles with the fumes
Of she-oak logs that glow in curtained rooms.
Dreams softly fly
On velvet wings in Sydney in July.

Love's Harvest.

There are ruddy peaches hanging where pink blossoms
 once did blow,
 And the golden corn is rustling where the green flag
 used to grow,
 Wee, downy birds are cheeping where but spotted eggs
 did lie,
 When all the world is faring thus, dear heart, why should
 not I?

There are promises like peaches that should ripen into
 deeds,
 And hopes that like the yellow corn should satisfy my
 needs,
 There are little joys within my heart that only wait for
 wings
 To rise and fill the blue of Heaven with happy carollings.

Then lay thy hand, dear heart, in mine, deny me not my
 share
 Of the rich sheaves of harvest being garnered everywhere,
 Yield me thyself in season due, for thou my summer art,
 Thy love shall fill and ripen all the powers of my heart.

A Northern Plain, *South Australia.*

O wide, wide plain that winneth thought to thee,
 What is thy charm and what thy potency
 To weary hearts like mine? I love, I love
 To dream of thee, Heaven's azure arch above
 Is not more free, across thy great expanse
 The sunshine lies as if a magic trance
 Detained it, and a soft gray monotone—
 The hue of dreams—enfolds thee, and the moan
 Of night-winds o'er thee, when a silver flood
 Invades thee, stirs the hearer's frightened blood
 To weird delight. Thy limitless repose
 Upon my heart like mesmerism grows.
 Ah me! to steep my spirit once again
 In thy enchanted calm—oh! Northern Plain.

Rondo.

I had a little thought
In the good gray gloaming,
 Oh! so slender,
 Oh! so tender
Was that little thought of mine,
Like a web of silver moonbeams
On a dewy meadow wrought,
Or the rainbow bubbles foaming
On my shallow glass of wine.
But the silver gloaming faded
In night's velvet mantle caught,
 And the winking
 Bubbles sinking
In my shallow glass were gone.
And alas! I'll ne'er recover
That entrancing little thought,
Though I seek with forehead shaded
For ever and anon.

January.

Oh! January! January! bind your ruffled hair
 And look no longer at us with that bold and brazen stare,
 And lift your feet from off the land that faints beneath
 your tread
 And let us see if we are on our heels or on our head.
 Oh molten maiden January! go back from whence you
 came,
 Your kiss is but a scorching sear, your smile is but a flame,
 You have racked us, you have wrecked us with your
 wild and wilful ways,
 You have drawn us out, and worn us out through endless
 burning days,
 We have shuddered at your footstep, we have fainted at
 your smile,
 And yet, upon my word I think we've loved you all the
 while,
 You have trampled on our feelings, you have 'most un-
 hinged our minds
 With your extra-ultra-inter-outer scorching, screeching
 winds,
 You have melted us and stewed us in a limp and luke-
 warm rain,
 And then dried us, yes and fried us, nice and hot and
 brown again,

JANUARY.

We have cursed you for a termagant, we've sworn you are
a shrew,

And yet, believe me, January, we have loved you too.

For you've given us feasts of colour when at evening you
undressed

And threw your rose and saffron robes across the tidy
west,

And I've seen your diamonds glitter on many a sultry
night

And I knew the moon was leagued with you, so glorious
was her light,

And the orchards knew your coming, and a luscious blush
was born

Upon a million velvet cheeks to greet you every morn,

And you scatter gold about you—for in spite of all, I
ween,

You come of ancient lineage and are every inch a queen,

So try and prune your passions, and bind this golden rule

For crown about your regal brow, oh! January! *Keep
cool.*

In Memoriam.

The earth, the old familiar earth
That I have trod so long,
Stepping with cheeriness and mirth
Among a friendly throng.

This earth is of a sudden made
A hallowed place to me
By the dear dead within it laid
In quiet majesty.

Oh! dear familiar earth with rich
Green mantle overspread,
Hold gently in his narrow niche
My own beloved dead.

Oh! dear familiar earth, bestrew
Thy verdure where he lies,
And let some sweet wild blossoms through
To link him with the skies.

And let the wind, with tireless tone
In blast, or balmiest air
Chant a Te Deum of its own,
A never-ending prayer.

IN MEMORIAM.

To thee, oh! Mother Earth, to thee
 And thy great heart I give
 This dear dust that is part of me,
 That lit the life I live.

His dust to thee I give, yet turn
 From thy kind, sheltering sod
 And, through his risen soul discern
 With clearer eyes, my God.

A Song.

If I could steal from out your busy life
 One moment for mine own,
 I'd choose a dreamy twilight—tinted hour,
 With deathless memories sown,
 And in the scented gloom of forest ways,
 I'd turn your truant heart to other days.

I'd pluck a lily from the dreaming pool,
 And bid you kiss its core,
 And let it whisper of as fair a thing
 Your lips have touched before,

A SONG.

And if you saw its beauty faint and fail,
I'd tell your women's hearts are just as frail.

If I could steal from out your busy life
One moment for mine own,
I'd teach your eyes again their tender glance,
Your voice its vanished tone,
Once more your soul should kneel in prayer to mine,
And life should find again its lost design.

Alas! What madness do I dream? In vain
The broken lily seeks to bloom again,
And 'mid the ashes of Love's blackened pyre
Shall we find burning still the sacred fire?
I would not deign to take—though all your years
Knelt suppliant at my feet and plead with tears—
I would not deign to take from out your life
One moment for mine own.

Compensation.

Cold too cold doth burn like fire,
Sweets too sweet become our bane,
Truth too true is half a liar,
Joy too great turns into pain.

Lights intensely light but blind us,
Eloquent deep silence grows,
Every good that life can find us
At its zenith zero shows.

Yet this law hath compensation
That the dreaming spirit feels,
Who can gauge the exaltation
Pain superlative reveals?

Souls are harps where master fingers
Music find in every string,
Harmony, half silent, lingers
Till her sadness makes her sing.

Then her melting cry will thrill you
With the pathos of its tone,
Then entrance your ear, until you
Sorrow's inspiration own.

COMPENSATION.

Strange and subtle, to reveal it,
Words are poor and harsh and brief
Only such as know and feel it
Can believe the joy of grief.

A Patriotic Song.

Australia! heiress of the years,
Set in thy circling ocean,
Dear native land! by this right hand
I pledge thee my devotion.

Here is mine arm for thy defence,
True as the cross above thee.
Here is my brain to work thee gain,
Here is my heart to love thee.

I take thy wattle for my badge
And worthily I'll wear it.
Its plume of gold no slave shall hold,
No coward spirit share it.

A PATRIOTIC SONG.

The six stars of thy virgin flag
At English hearth fires lighted
Shall never wane while they remain
To Truth and Honour plighted.

Thine upward path no foot hath trod,
Its dangers are uncharted;
No eye can see thy destiny,
Then meet it lion-hearted.

Beside the records of the past,
Shot through with shame and glory,
Thy sons shall write in all men's sight
Indelibly thy story.

And seal it with their patriot blood
When thick thy foes assail thee,
The sun shall wear to darkness ere
Australian hearts shall fail thee.

CHORUS.

Australia! heiress of the years
Set in thy eireling ocean,
Dear native land! by this right hand
I pledge thee my devotion.

A Reverie.

There are pink geraniums in the vases near me,
 Their tinted faces look into my own,
 Methinks they almost understand and hear me,
 As moodily I ponder here alone.

Oh! pretty little pink geraniums bending
 Your innocent young glances down on me,
 I know the message you are gently sending—
 The message of your silent sympathy.

Slow ticks the clock, the silence punctuating,
 Outside the wind doth underline it deep,
 While overhead the stars are palpitating
 With golden lustre, even in their sleep.

And in the stillness, Thought whom I evaded
 Through all the noisy turmoil of the day
 Has laid his hand upon me and the faded
 Brilliance of his eyes, and sent away

The lovely little dream-nymphs, who with kirtles
 Of fairy fancies broidered with delight
 Dwelt happily among the flowering myrtles
 Of a domain I hide from mortal sight.

A REVERIE.

Oh! pretty little pink geraniums, listen!

I do not want this stern invader, Thought,
I want the dewy eyes that gleam and glisten,
The glimmering hair by lily fingers caught.

I want the happy little laughing faces,
The scarlet lips that smile, the feet that play,
The shreds of gold, the film of snowy laces,
The little dream-loves Thought has sent away.

I do not want to think, to weigh and ponder,
To know life's hard reality,
To muse upon the dreary facts that yonder
In the great world hold high supremacy.

I do not want to know—I'm tired of knowing,
I want to weave my fancy webs in peace,
What use to watch the shadows growing, growing?
To count the tears that fall and never cease?

I want my little dream-loves back beside me,
I want their hands to lie content in mine,
Their fragile wings are strong enough to hide me,
Their kisses are life's surest anodyne.

A REVERIE.

Oh! pretty little pink geraniums, tell me
 Where shall I find them? Tender are your eyes,
 You bend down from your vases, and impel me
 To stop and listen to your low replies.

I hear the words you whisper in my ear,
 Words gentle, yet with bitter meaning fraught—
 “Thy little dream-loves, they are gone, we fear,
 Dead, frozen by the icy breath of Thought.”

What the Overseer Told Me.

You want to know something of Billy? You hear
 there's a story to tell,
 Let's heap on the fire, for it's chilly, and this room is
 as cold as a well.
 I thought him the worst little nigger I'd had the mis-
 fortune to meet,
 Though even before he was bigger than the kangaroo-
 pup at your feet,
 He could ride any horse on the station, we'd plenty of
 buckjumpers, too,
 But he stuck on—the black incarnation of reckless
 defiance—like glue.

WHAT THE OVERSEER TOLD ME.

Why! when I first broke the bay filly—and she was a
nice cup of tea—

No one dared mount her but Billy, by jove! 'twas a
caution to see!

The men crowded up after shearing and sat in a circle
around

And watched the mare wildly careering and bet on
how soon he'd be downed,

But there he sat on, his eyes flashing, his thick woolly
hair all on end,

And she, in a fury, was lashing her heels about, you
may depend.

She might just as well have aspired to shake off her
mane or her skin!

And so she caved in, mighty tired, and Billy continued
to grin.

He was up to some mischief for ever, and brimful of
lying and tricks,

And though he was handy and clever, he got fewer
ha'pence than kicks.

He'd yard up the sheep like a collie, and shear with the
best of the men,

But unless he'd a mind to, 'twas folly to think you
could force him to then,

WHAT THE OVERSEER TOLD ME.

For when he found civilisation no longer amused him
well

He'd visit some dusky relation, and stay in the scrub
for a spell.

One day the mail brought us a letter from Chapman,
the owner, to say

He thought that he couldn't do better than take a short
trip up our way,

'Twas years since he'd been on the station, and he knew
it would be pretty rough,

But could we find accommodation for a lady? and there
sure enough

He arrived with his daughter, Marquita, a tall, slender
slip of a girl

With a face like a flower, only sweeter, and soft shining
hair all acurl.

'Twas just at the end of September that I drove them
from Mimbado Creek.

Billy had cleared, I remember, and been away over a
week,

But what with the bustle and worry of having a lady
you know

We were all in too much of a flurry to care if he came
back or no.

WHAT THE OVERSEER TOLD ME.

And one evening, when shadows were flitting across the
great grey silent sky,
And the whole earth was still, we were sitting there
smoking, old Chapman and I,
A creeper trailed pale yellow blossoms all up the
verandah post tall,
We heard the soft nibbling of 'possums in a wattle tree
close to the wall,
The lamplight fell white like a river of light, through
the door opened wide
There came a soft violin quiver—Marquita was singing
inside—
Her gown in its exquisite whiteness, her smile and the
gleam of her hair
Seemed all just a part of the brightness surrounding
her everywhere.
All at once I saw something come sliding up through
the bushes, and knew
It was Billy come back, softly gliding with naked feet
over the dew.
He stole to the window and listened, his face full of
wondering awe,
I saw his black eyes as they glistened, he thought 'twas
a spirit he saw.

WHAT THE OVERSEER TOLD ME.

God knows what remarkable notions he had in the Deity
line

But I've seen wiser men pay devotions to goddesses far
less divine.

Ah, beautiful star-eyed Marquita! she seemed like a
flower among weeds,

Rough breezes blew gently to greet her, rough hearts
stirred to chivalrous deeds;

And wherever she rode on the station—she sat her
horse, too, like a queen—

You might reckon without hesitation Billy was there to
be seen,

For some magic that lay in her laughter, some spell of
her voice or her face,

Bewitched the boy, drawing him after to follow her over
the place,

But, to cut the tale short, after staying a few weeks
they left us again

And after some little delaying we started to drive to
the train.

I thought I had better take Billy to help with the horses
and that,

For the track was a rough one, and hilly, and we had
to camp out on the flat.

WHAT THE OVERSEER TOLD ME.

I remember 'twas fine sunny weather, with a blue sky
and warm, scented air,
The horses pulled staunchly together, I had in the
young chestnut pair,
And the track, like a ribbon gleamed whitely thro' the
sand, or glowed red through the clay,
The wild hop shrubs bent to us lightly, the mallees
arched over our way,

And through the still air all ashimmer with sunlight,
and soft shifting haze,
We saw phantom water-lakes glimmer, then vanish and
melt from our gaze;
It seemed to me like a land dreaming in silence, un-
broken, and deep,
Not the silence of death, rather seeming the warm
throbbing silence of sleep.
And when the crimson sun-splendour flushed the sky,
like the cheek of a girl,
Then faded to pinks and greys tender that melted in
opal and pearl,
You'd spy by a great rocky boulder a soft-footed grey
kangaroo,
Then you'd long for a gun on your shoulder, or a horse
and a good dog or two.

WHAT THE OVERSEER TOLD ME.

When the shadows gave way to the glamour of the
uprising ambient moon
There came a soft fluttering clamour of ducks from the
reedy lagoon,
And then the day suddenly breaking with sleepy bird-
cries in the trees
And the perfume of gum blossoms shaking their plumes
on the petulant breeze.
At last we arrived at the station, which, save for a
pointsman or two
Seemed almost without habitation, and indeed there
was little to do.

I remember Marquita stood, slender and upright, and
close by her side,
And seeming by contrast to lend her more beauty, stood
Billy, wide-eyed.
I knew by her face she was thinking how the black boy
would stare at the train,
Already his black eyes were blinking, mouth opening and
shutting again,
For, on with a loud, hollow roaring, its windows like
great glaring eyes
And a volume of smoke fiercely pouring, the train
thundered over the rise

WHAT THE OVERSEER TOLD ME.

Like a black hissing serpent devouring the still summer
landscape it came

With a quick blaze of sparks redly showering, and its
copper crest shining like flame.

And then, when it suddenly whistled,—a short, sharp,
shrill, echoing scream—

Poor Billy's hair actually bristled, I saw his white teeth
all agleam,

He seized his thick wattle-tree waddy, his eyes seemed
to start from his head,

A quiver ran right through his body, as he turned to
Marquita and said,

“Yah! secum, one big Debbil-Debbil! No catch you,
me kill um,” and then

With a shout in his quavering treble, and before we
could even count ten,

He had leapt down the rails and was springing in
frenzied assault on the train,

A faint thud—a slight clog in its swinging—then it swept
on untrammelled again.

Ah, poor little Billy! for ever cut off by the passionless
force

Of great iron wheels that can never know pity, nor
touch of remorse.

WHAT THE OVERSEER TOLD ME.

And Marquita? She fainted, no wonder, she had
 clutched at his arm as he ran,
 And stumbled and fell almost under the wheels of the
 passenger van.
 Yes, that's all. Have you heard of the station where
 black boys are trained on the run,
 And, as well as a good education, get plenty of tucker
 and fun?
 Well, that scheme is Marquita's, she raised it instead
 of a cold, useless stone
 In remembrance of one little nigger who gave up his
 life for her own.

A Thought.

Oh! this is joy to fashion
 With cunning rune and rhyme
 A song of love and passion
 That withers not with time;
 To miss the critic's stricture
 By poems richly wrought
 The line that makes a picture,
 The word that holds a thought.

A THOUGHT.

Not sounds, like beads that follow
And tinkle as they fall,
While every one is hollow,
No pearl among them all;
To delve in thought's recesses,
And find the virgin gold,
And through the mind's fine presses
A current coinage mould
That, from the brain fresh-minted,
Shall pass from hand to hand,
And, with truth's seal imprinted,
Enrich a needy land.

Oh! this is joy to utter,
Not strange and foreign words,
But the soft sounds that flutter
The throats of nesting birds,
To aid, by living phrases,
Tired souls their watch to keep,
Or, 'mid life's harsh amazes,
Sing one sad heart to sleep.

A Modern Lover.

You are my waiting letter, why should I break the seal?
Once I have read your message, what can you then
 reveal?

Rosebuds were made for opening, and silence for breed-
 ing speech,

But who knows if joys we gather match those that are
 out of reach?

You are my Isle of Promise, why should I step ashore?
Once I have climbed the summits, what can I then
 explore?

Problems were made for solving—you are my mystery,
But once you've unlocked a casket, what is the use of
 the key?

You are my wine of Circe, but how, when the draught
 is done,

Shall I quench my thirst? By remembrance or the lees
 of a kiss long won?

Loiter along with me, dearest, sign to the stars to wait,
Better a dream uncompleted than the round of a
 finished fate.

You are my hidden Future; never become my past,
Let's stretch our elastic present as long as its strength
 will last,

A MODERN LOVER.

What may be holds a thrill, dear, and gold cannot
 purchase thrills,
 So better a shadow of good than the possible good of
 ills.

Bid Me Farewell and Smile.

Coriolanus, Act IV., Scene I.

Bid me farewell and smile, though I be gone,
 Still shall the pulses of your life beat on,
 Still shall your days be studded free
 With opening doors of opportunity.
 Tears should not dim our vision, nor defile
 Our severing paths. Bid me farewell and smile.

Bid me farewell and smile, my spirit feels
 The tremor of your own, and reverent kneels
 Beneath its benediction, and it shall not quail
 At this, the body's severance, nor faint, and fail.
 How can Death fright us, or time touch us while
 Love lives? Dear Heart! look up, bid me farewell and
 smile.

A Sydney Southerly.

Oh! Spirit, roaring up from those Antarctic regions
That draw men's hearts, and hold them bound in
frost,

You, with resolve upon your wings, and airy legions
With helms of courage icily embossed,

Oh! splendid tempest proudly hurtling from the south,
Kiss your weak city maiden upon her languid mouth,
Jeer at the lazy lover who lies sleeping on her breast,
Until he leaps up snarling, with the white foam on his
crest.

Plunge up the rocky coast line, kindle or quench the
stars,

Thunder your savage storm chords on our horizon bars;
Dance us the same fandango you danced when the
great berg split,

And you drove the fierce green rollers to snap and
harry it.

Smite us with icy hammers forged in the sunless
gloom

Ere the spectral lights had budded, and burst into
awful bloom;

A SYDNEY SOUTHERLY.

Scourge us with lashing rain flails, shout, shout, aloud
 in your wrath,
Till the souls in our shrinking bodies shall answer and
 come forth

Lifted aloft by your passion, kings by your royal
 right,
Worthy to work in the daytime or watch through a fate-
 ful night,
Stripped of their sultry vapours, and hectic lassitude,
Clean with your barbarous candour, as natural, as
 nude ;
Flung from their narrow orbits to battle with basic
 laws,
And answer the savage queries of a long-forgot first
 cause.

The Draught of Life.

She held a crystal chalice in her hands,
A chalice, brimming to its carven lip
With clearest water. Such an icy draught
As men, with starting eyes, and burning lips,
That mouth in agony the brazen sands
Of sun-cursed deserts, dream of, and go mad.
She held it from her, lifting tear-wet eyes
To one who sat above, and bent to hear
Her prayer, and answered with a gathering frown:
“A change for thee? Some other draught than this
To quench thy thirst and satisfy thy soul?
Did'st not thou come, a few short seasons back
To claim, as was thy right, thy draught of life,
And did I not, complying with the hot
Impetuous passion of thy eager youth,
Then bid thee choose, and did'st thou not—
None hindering—none coercing—stretch thine hand
And choose from all the rest, this very cup
From which thou now dost turn so loathingly,
To cry with tears for any draught but this?
What meanest thou?”
Then quick she cried, “Oh, stern and changeless one!
I was so young—How could I know? I dreamed
I knew, and knew not. Then it seemed to me
All draughts were equal. How could I divine

THE DRAUGHT OF LIFE.

That this, which looks so clear and sparkles so,
Should prove so tasteless? Ah, then—pity me
And give me but a little flask of wine
That I may drink, and feel between my lips
Its heavenly flavour.”

The Arbiter looked down upon the face
Uplifted to him, marked the lovely curves
Of chin and forehead, and the magic gloom
Of dark eyes raying lustre, thro’ a fringe
Of darker lashes, marked the mouth’s red bow
Apart with pleading, and the slender form
A flower on tip-toe, reaching towards the sun—
Himself—yet sternly spake: “Oh, foolish one,
The draught thou hast is needful for thee—sweet
And pure, an element of life, the source and spring
And vivifying power of every draught
That ever was, or ever yet can be;
The vintage of the skies! so good and pure
That man may live from strong and happy youth
To age as happy, and across his lips
Let not another liquid pass, and thou
Did’st take it gladly, joyfully, yet now,
Tho’ still the chalice brims as full and clear
As if thou had’st not drunk, thou comest here
To bid me give thee other. Why is this?”

THE DRAUGHT OF LIFE.

With passion vexed the dark eyes sudden flashed
Through lifted lashes, and a mounting flame
Across the velvet texture of the cheek
Turned lilies into roses. Dashing down
The crystal chalice till its fragments rang
A hundred death-knells on the marble floor
And shivered into silence, while there ran
Across her spurning feet the limpid tide
To flow away and fade to nothingness
In far-off corners, hotly cried the maid :
“I will not have it! Flat and flavourless,
I hate—I loathe it. Long a tasteless draught
Have I been drinking, deeming it was Life,
While others quaff the rich and ruddy juice
Of wealthy vineyards mellow with the warmth
Of garnered summers, and the poignant charm
Of far-off countries, where the very air
Is fragrant with romance, and every night,
In chiselled silver, mimics every day’s
Full burnished gold, and every honied breeze
Can whisper secrets to the dreaming fields,
And every flower that nods a perfumed head
Is full of passion. Oh! from such a land
What generous floods, blood-red and golden-brown
And amber-tinted fill the happy veins

THE DRAUGHT OF LIFE.

With sweet, mysterious magic! Give not me
 Thy 'vintage of the skies,' so cold, so pale,
 So wan and spiritless, but let me taste
 The rich enchantments that I know must lie
 In other draughts."

The stern brow of the Arbiter relaxed
 In pity for her. "Dost thou deem," he said,
 "That passion and romance are always hid
 In alien ways? A clearer spirit dwelt
 In thy pellucid water than is found
 In any wine, however rare it be,
 And deep, within the heart of homely things
 A kernel lies that hath the power to bud
 And blossom into beauty if the eye
 Hath wit to find it. And thy chalice held
 All goodness in solution, Purity
 And Cleanliness, and power to satisfy
 All healthy thirst; Affection, deep and true,
 That long outlives the passion thou dost crave;
 And Duty plain, and pleasant that will bring
 A fairer guerdon than the phantom charms
 Romance may promise, and Tranquility,
 A flavour hard to find in any draught,
 However rich." Then, marking how her eyes

THE DRAUGHT OF LIFE.

Impatient wandered, sighingly he gave
 Into her hands a goblet, ruby red,
 Wherein a quivering sunbeam prisoned lay
 And glinted fitfully. A fragrance rare
 As incense, delicate and fine, was borne
 Half fainting on the air. "Take then this draught,
 Since so thy will is set. Yet know that he
 Who lacketh wine may live to know he lacks,
 But whoso lacketh water—better far
 He had not lived at all. Yet, since so soon
 It palled upon thy senses, and became
 So hateful to thee, that, impetuous, thou
 Hast cast it from thee, take for thy life-draught
 This other—Nay!—but thank me not until
 Thou see'st how it serves thee." Silence fell
 As, light as summer rain that pattering falls
 A moment and is gone, her footsteps passed
 Along the corridor. With head erect
 And eyes agleam, triumphantly she bore
 Her prize away, already feeling through
 Her every vivid sense its magic steal.

Scarce Time had ta'en upon his endless march
 A step or two before the Arbiter,
 Still seated on his high and lonely throne,

THE DRAUGHT OF LIFE.

With thought swathed like a bandage o'er his
 eyes,
 Saw, as with drooping wing all silently
 The Evening stole on velvet-sandalled feet
 Into his court—a slender figure come
 As soft as Evening's self. As reeds that lie
 Along the marshes, after hurtling winds
 Have fiercely smit them, broken not—but bent,
 And set no longer on their slender stems
 To sway in poise so exquisitely true,
 Their very weakness seems the grace of strength—
 So was the lissom figure. As a bud
 Unsheathed by human fingers coarse and rude,
 Forestalling Nature's delicate designs,
 For ever blighting by their carnal touch
 A fragile purity—so was the face,
 And o'er the shadowy floor on trembling knees,
 With little hands outstretched, and darkened eyes
 She searched each separate vein that threaded
 through
 The polished marble for some little nook,
 Some hollow, haply at a pillar's foot
 Wherein a pool, or, e'en a single drop
 Of water might have lodged—in vain, in vain!

THE DRAUGHT OF LIFE.

And from his lofty seat the Arbiter
 Though seasoned to the sight of human woe,
 Drew close the bandage o'er his eyes and held
 His bated breath to keep from shuddering.

A Confession.

You did not know, how could you, dear,
 How much you stood for? Life in you
 Retained its touch of Eden dew,
 And ever, through the droughtiest year,
 My soul could bring her flagon here
 And fill it to the brim with clear
 Deep draughts of purity.
 And time could never quench the flame
 Of youth, that lit me through your eyes,
 And cozened winter from my skies
 Through all the years that went and came.
 You did not know I used your name
 To conjure by, and still the same
 I found its potency.

A CONFESSION.

You did not know that, as a phial
 May garner close through dust and gloom
 The essence of a rich perfume,
Romance was garnered in your smile
And touched my thoughts with beauty, while
The poor world wise with bitter guile
 Outlived its chivalry.

You did not know—our lives were laid
 So far apart—that thus I drew
 The sunshine of my days from you,
That by your joy my own was weighed,
That thus my debts your sweetness paid,
And of my heart's deep silence made
 A lovely melody.

I'll Explain.

I know just how it happened,
I remember what you said,
And how I would not listen
And how you bowed your head
In angry salutation as you strode off through the rain,
If you'll just come back a moment,
Oh, my dearest! I'll explain.

I've been waiting, I've been watching
All this long and weary while,
I've been brushing from my lashes
Tears that tried to drown a smile;
I've been bridging with my wishes
These long weeks of bitter pain,
And if you'll come and listen,
Oh, my dearest! I'll explain.

There were words we might have spoken,
And some we should have missed,
There was just one little moment
When I'm sure we should have kissed;
There were thoughts we might have sheltered
And some we should have slain,
But 'twill all come right, believe me,
If you'll let me just explain.

I'LL EXPLAIN.

If you'll only come back, dearest,
And take my eager hand,
That has sought so long to find you,
I can make you understand.
Oh! my heart! it is but mocking,
You will never come again,
For the dead care not to hear us,
Howsoever we explain.

My Wealth.

Queens wear necklets, rich and fine,
With diamonds in a cluster,
Or strings of pearl that gleam and shine
With iridescent lustre.
But I have jewels that I prize
Far beyond such merchandise.

Queens may shield them from the cold
With furs, and costly laces,
In sables fabulous enfold
Their fair and haughty faces.
My necklet of the purest pearl
Closer than diamonds presses—
The clasped arms of my little girl
That meet in dear caresses.

And I am warmed to heart's deep core
By kisses from her endless store.
And queens may keep their boughten charms.
So I have these small clasping arms.

A December Posy.

The days are long and gracious,
Gold-washed from dawn to dusk,
The crinum's galaxy of stars
Has burst its emerald husk.

I send you for a token
A sheaf of Christmas bells,
A word I have not spoken
Deep in their petals dwells.

But, lest you should misread it,
Or it should plead in vain,
I've whispered to a flannel-flower
What she will tell again.

For certain to the Christmas bush,
Whose rosy blush will be
An exquisite ambassador
To plead my cause for me.

And if your heart endorses
The message of my flowers,
The past may keep its treasures
For the future will be ours.

Sydney in August.

The drenched earth is very quiet,
Oh! but soon the green will riot,
Every little weed be lifted
With a dower of blossom gifted,
And the honey-eaters nesting,
All their capital investing,
Watch the first boronias coming,
Hear the first bees gaily humming;
Keen and clear the young stars glitter,
If the frost came 'twould be bitter,
But the sun hath golden treasure,
He will pay, all at his leisure
Winter's last cold-blooded charges,
Small accounts that spite enlarges,
And the Spring's first lavish payment
For her green and golden raiment.
He is king, and all shall know it,
He hath regal signs to show it,
Though the mountains still are rebels,
And the white surf scolds the pebbles,
Though the sulky sea-fogs linger,
When he lifts his shining finger,
Such a spell of love is in it
They'll surrender in a minute.

Peculations.

Though you may never notice me,
Nor e'er your loss recall,
I tell you, that instinctively
I wrong and rob you all.

Some trifle that you never miss,
Some touch of voice or face,
A legal peculation this
Upon the human race.

Some shadow that your eyes have caught
From depths I never plunbed,
Some wisdom from a book of thought
That I have never thumbed.

You toil, and though you do not heed,
I share in your reward,
The seal of your accomplished deed
Is added to my hoard.

The largesse of all happy minds
I glean in shining sheaves,
And what the greedy miser binds
My greedier spirit thieves.

PECULATIONS.

The solace that from grief you wring,
All sorrowless is mine,
And when you build a faultless thing,
I borrow the design.

The tracks you blaze, the spurs you win—
Of all I take my tithe;
Ay, even when Death garners in
I levy on the scythe.

Though you may never notice me,
Nor any loss recall,
I will confess that shamelessly
I wrong, and rob you all.

A Garden Hat.

I found it to-day in the dust and gloom,
 Where the moths and the spiders revel,
 Of a communistic lumber room,
 Where the ranks of all are level,
 Where the aristocrats of a by-gone day
 Hobnob with plebeian lumber,
 And rosewood trifles and velvets gay
 With deal and horsehair slumber,
 And fans that will flutter and flirt no more
 By delicate fingers wielded
 Lie on the dust-encumbered floor
 By kindly cobwebs shielded,
 And packets of letters, dim and pale,
 As the passions their writers vaunted,
 In faded characters seem to rail
 In the silence spectre-haunted.

I found it to-day, with its edges frayed,
 Its garland of poppies wilted,
 A garden hat, beneath whose shade
 A charming chin was tilted,
 And against its broad, low sweeping brim
 Her sunny hair would cluster,
 Her dark eyes dancing with every whim
 And alight with youth's own lustre.

A GARDEN HAT.

The azure day with its golden frame
 And its white clouds lightly flying,
 The winds that softly sighed her name,
 The rustling leaves replying,
 For a garden hat, without a doubt,
 Argues a garden sunny,
 And there are pretty sure to be bees about
 Where are blossoms full of honey;
 And only a head full of Love's romance
 Would seek such a flimsy cover,
 So I know, at my first, most casual glance,
 That there must have been a lover.

And I'm just as sure of the words he said,
 Whatever his creed or nation,
 I can guess, though he's long since dumb and dead,
 The theme of his oration;
 And I like to think that, though each romance,
 While believing itself immortal,
 Must fade 'neath the finger of time and chance
 And pass through decay's dim portal,
 The spirit of love is a thing apart,
 A flame that no time assuages,
 But, lighted afresh at each lover's heart,
 Burns on undimmed through the ages.

Between the Courses.

The dinner drags—Oh, dear! Why do we dine,
 Attack the menu gravely, line by line?
 Outside, the moon shines like an opal hoop,
 While we, poor fools, are occupied with soup!
 Outside, the buttercups sleep in the grass,
 The breezes stop to kiss them as they pass.
 Outside—but never mind, I will not fret,
 I see there's turkey to console me yet.
 Once on a time—how long is it ago?—
 You scoffed at dinner-parties—called them slow,
 You used to say—but times are changed—Ah, me!
 I must invest in a new memory,
 This old one knows too much, will not be still,
 Complains of hopes that time did not fulfil,
 Remembers dewy gloamings long ago,
 Gone—no more claret—where all good things go,
 Yes; pity my grotesque and awful fate,
 I'm haunted by a memory out of date!
 A poor, benighted, antiquated thing
 That will keep harping on one worn-out string,
 That babbles on of rides through twilight glooms
 Beneath the heavy scents of wattle blooms
 Dwells, like a dotard, on a strand of hair
 That hid your ear—and, yes, I do declare

BETWEEN THE COURSES.

Reiterates again, and yet again,
As if it mattered! that a crimson stain
Leapt up into your cheek, when, stooping low,
I laid my hand upon your saddle-bow,
Insists, as if it mattered! that there came
A lovely light, half shadow and half flame,
Into your eyes when—Yes, the grapes are fine!—
When I had—Pardon, did you ask for wine?
Allow me, pray—when I had told you all,
Poor, blundering idiot! being in a thrall,
Spellbound, bewildered by that phantom thing,
That dear delusion that the poets sing,
Called—Heaven help it!—by the name of Love,
And kissing, like a child, your doeskin glove,
Its very buttons, and the milk-white wrist
That lent itself in dimples to be kissed.
And this was I—the self-same I, whose lips
Would scorn, to-night, to touch your finger-tips,
This self-same I, who scarce would pause to hear
If one should pour whole love-songs in his ear,
This I, who—“*Hush, in mercy cease!*” I will
Because, oh, cruel love! I love you still.
No, do not rise, nor lose that well-bred charm,
That suits you as these opals suit your arm,
I have not raised my voice a single tone,

BETWEEN THE COURSES.

I have not been so stupid as to groan,
If you would only lift your eyes to mine
You'd see with what sang-froid I sip my wine,
How all my mental force is brought to bear
Upon the peeling of a duchess pear.
Look up, dear heart!—one little glance will do,
Are those sweet eyes I wonder still as blue
As I remember them two years ago?
Two years!—two centuries! How could you know
That when I left you, pale and passion-torn,
Meeting your pride with pride, your scorn with scorn,
To wander over God's good, patient earth,
With eyes that saw not, heart that found no worth,
Nor any pleasant thing beneath the sun,
Because of one dear face denied me—one
That haunted all my days, and silent drew
My heart across the continents to you,
How could you know I hungered for your eyes?
Look up!—look up! Ah! what? the ladies rise,
How white you are! and will I kindly tell
Your hostess you are leaving—are not well?
And will I call your husband, Captain Dare?
Your husband!—your—your husband! Ah, take care!
Here, help!—a lady faints. Be quick! that glass!
So, thanks! You have her? Kindly let me pass.

The Making of a Nation.

Not by rearing fairy arches,
Decked with flowers a day shall fade;
Not by flinging myriad banners
Forth from tower and colonnade;

Not by feasts and shows and pastimes,
Fitting though such revels be;
Not by words of adulation
Poured from lands across the sea;

Not by these—a moment's trifles,
Brilliant, but of little worth—
Not by these shall we who love her
Celebrate our Nation's birth.

Deeper, deeper, past these baubles
And this proud and high acclaim
Beats a mighty heart that quivers
At the naming of her name,

And a low and strenuous murmur,
Like a surely rising flood,
Tells the passionate awakening
Of the true Australian blood.

THE MAKING OF A NATION.

We who love her! We who love her!
Where and what and who are we?
Sweep your hand from Moreton Island
Till it meets the westward sea.

And from Torres Straits to Bruni,
From the Leeuwin to Mackay,
Wheresoe'er you go you'll find us;
Call us, you shall have reply.

What are we who love Australia?
This the future shall reveal;
Yet, let every heart remember
Single worth makes common weal.

Who are we that love Australia?
Let a foe from near or far
Lift a hand to wound or shame her
And discover who we are.

Not by vain and idle boasting,
Not by wild, impetuous deeds,
But by steady, high endeavour
Shall we fitly serve her needs.

THE MAKING OF A NATION.

Honesty in hall and household,
Honour in the public mart,
Individual worth of purpose,
Purity of lip and heart.

These our flags for her adorning,
These her wreaths of deathless bloom,
These the jewelled lamps to guide her
And her upward path illumine.

We who love her! God hath lavished
At her feet all earthly good,
Ours it is to make and keep her
Worthy of her Nationhood.

Blessed are the Pure in Heart.

My love sat on a high, high hill,
No other hill was near,
The air seemed woven of happy thoughts,
It was so heavenly clear.

My love saw purple plains outspread
Beneath the twilight sky,
She felt the heart within her swell,
She could not tell me why.

She said the world seemed very lone,
The stars so distant hung,
As if God had forgotten them
—My love is very young.—

She thought the silence spoke to her
A message from long years,
It was not sad, and yet her eyes
Filled suddenly with tears.

She said she thought our lives were linked
To some great life unseen,
And that it would reveal itself
To those whose hearts were clean.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART.

She leaned her head against my breast,
As flowers lean to the air,
I felt her spirit mount and mount,
And down that crystal stair

A conscious Presence seemed to pass,
And as we sat, heart-still,
God came and spoke with us a while
Upon that high, high hill.

My Gift.

I had a lovely gift to-day
Delivered bright and early,
The heart of it was heavenly blue,
Its edges pale and pearly.

A turquoise, set in living gold,
So flawless and so splendid,
It seemed to be of fire and dew
Miraculously blended.

And ere I knew my need of it,
Or had presumed to ask it,
'Twas chosen by a connoisseur
From an imperial casket.

And when along the quickening east
A wave of light was breaking,
'Twas softly laid outside my door,
To greet me on awaking.

A royal gift! Its only plea
That I should freely take it;—
A summer day, from dawn to dusk,
Perfect as God could make it.

Waiting.

He stands all day by the paddock rail,
With downcast head, and drooping tail,
And he looks across to the stable door,
And waits for a step that will come no more.
The clover blossoms, so faint and sweet,
Lift wooing faces about his feet,
And the tall grass sways in the gentle breeze,
But I do not think he even sees,
And the cloudless blue of the summer skies
Finds only shadow within his eyes.
When the sun has climbed to his sapphire dome,
And pauses, turning his face towards home,
You will see this lonely watcher turn,
With lifted ears and eyes that burn,
You will see him toss an impatient mane,
And quiver with eager hope again,
You will hear in his sudden deep-toned neigh,
"Surely, ah! surely he'll come to-day!"
But the hours drag by, and the shadows fall,
And nobody ever comes at all.
The browsing cattle, fat and sleek,
Find luscious pasture beside the creek,
They neither understand nor share
This exile's longing and despair.

WAITING.

Perhaps, on some sunny windless noon
He will hear far off the thrilling tune
Of baying hounds, that lightly floats
Across the upland in ringing notes,
And his eyes will flash, and his muscles strain
As he lives it over in dreams again,
And the blood leaps up with a sudden fire,
As he takes in his stride the wood-capped wire,
He feels live currents of wild delight,
Sympathies born of their headlong flight
Thrill from the slender sunburnt hands
That hold his reins, like electric bands.
He has given his strength and his matchless speed
To his rider, who has inspired his steed
With his human courage, his dauntless soul,
And so they are merged into one grand whole,
Triumphantly filled with the power to dare
Anything, everything, whatsoe'er,
A magic that turns the air to wine,
The turf to elastic, and fills with a fine
Free flood of quicksilver every vein,
That hurries the pulses and fevers the brain.
'Tis only a dream! and the eager fire,
The sparkle that tells of his famous sire

WAITING.

Dies from his eyes, and a strange dumb smart
Falls like a shadow across his heart.
He remembers, and yes, though he's only a horse,
Remembers it all with a dull remorse—
That last wild run on the afternoon
Of the blue and white of a golden June,
When he would be first in the eager crush,
When he would not steady his reckless rush,
Remembers the glorious thunder of feet
On the level plain, where the hedges meet,
Remembers how proudly he led the field
With a passionate daring that would not yield,
The lust of conquest was in his brain,
And he would not answer the guiding rein,
But seized the bit in his teeth, and flew
Like a soul possessed, and never knew
The fence was there, till with a crash
He struck and fell, and in a flash
The sky was hurtling overhead,
A hideous vision, black and red.
He heard one groan, one quivering breath,
And then, the eloquent hush of death.
Ah! even now as he stands alone,
He seems to hear that one deep groan,

WAITING.

And see a form 'mid the flowering furze
With blood-stained pink and shattered spurs,
And a young face turned to the cloudless skies,
Can it be thus that his master lies?
Eddy, his master, so young and gay,
Whose mother, kissing him just that day,
And watching him mount at the big white gate,
Had said "Now, Eddy, you won't be late!"
All this he sees in a hazy way,
As he stands in the sunshine day by day,
And it sometimes flashes across his brain
That Eddy will never come back again.
Yet he waits and waits by the paddock rail
With a patience that does not flag or fail,
For his heart is true, tho' his reason's dim,
And it's all rather misty and dark to him.
And the clover blossoms so faint and sweet,
May cluster softly about his feet,
But his eyes are fixed on the stable door,
And he waits for a step that will come no more.

Apart.

There's a quiet little runnel in my heart,
I hear its murmur when I stand apart,
Clear as drops on crystal falling,
Soft as flutes at evening calling,
It chimes, and chimes and fills my listening heart
With spirit music when I stand apart.

There's a quiet little runnel in my heart,
I feel its coolness when I stand apart,
Back of all the springs of being,
Back of thinking, feeling, seeing,
It bubbles up, and satisfies my heart
With living water when I stand apart.

There's a quiet little runnel in your heart,
If you doubt it, go in silence, stand apart,
And the wand of intuition
Will fulfil its happy mission,
And reveal it unto every waiting heart,
That seeketh, standing silently apart.

The Grove of Wattles.

The clamour of the city ringing loud
 Submerged the hurrying footsteps of the crowd,
 The teeming ways were all awash with faces,
 Hopes and despairs peopled the narrow spaces,
 And I among them, on myself intent,
 Scant notice on my fellow creatures bent,
 When, as I passed beneath the shadow of the towers
 Rose an incredible mirage of flowers!
 My sacred past, reborn in shimmering yellow
 Offered for pence, by some rude pavement fellow.
 Flowers that for years my heart had never sighted
 Shone there, like golden tapers freshly lighted,
 And as the tide of aching memories swept
 On that full fragrance borne, I almost think I wept.

There was the grove of wattles, thickly sown
 In a large pattern of its own,
 Planned subtly, as the custom is of trees
 To catch the mingled sunshine and the breeze,
 And full beneficence of dew, and here,
 Wrought like a finer gold upon the sheer
 Effulgence of the sunlight, rose a fume
 Of wattle sweets, part fragrance, and part bloom,
 And part my love of them, that bursting through
 The limits of the senses made a new

THE GROVE OF WATTLES.

And spiritual splendour. For the heart
When it is steeped in beauty must impart
Some of its rising passion, else it were
More than its mere humanity could bear.
And I have seen how beauty's outward frame,
Be it of colour, sound, or form or flame,
Can be so penetrated by a thought,
So in the flux of pure emotion caught
That every atom incandescent glows,
And new, and deeper depths of beauty shows.
This is the link of harmony that lies
Between our own and the Creator's eyes.

There was the grove of wattles. How they pressed
Plume over plume along the crest
Of the low hill, while at our very feet
Rolled luminous green waves of young September wheat,
And overhead those shoreless azure seas
Washing the prows of vaporous argosies
And the suggestive silence of the bush
That palpitates with meaning, and can push
With dreamful hand the seen into its place
And draw the veil from many a spirit face,
Silence, true comrade of the soul that waits
Close to the core of things, and translates

THE GROVE OF WATTLES.

Those subtle nuances, that thronging round
Still delicately evade the power of sound.

There was the grove of wattles. We drew rein
On that small eminence above the plain,
The native lark, her shrill song circling sweet
In vocal rings, rose from the springing wheat,
And like winged emeralds flung into the blue
The parroquets in joyous clusters flew,
And water-hens, small quaker maidens prim,
Trod to and fro about the river's brim,
A saddle creaking, and the warning word
Uttered from far by an apostle bird,
There were the only hints of life, and they
Fitted the muted music of the day.
O! arrow-like through all the city's roll,
The sense of that sweet silence touched my soul,
And cleaving through the barrier of years
Entered the very citadel of tears.

There was the grove of wattles. Gold on gold,
The perfect moment whose unmatchable mould
Breaks then for ever. Sound, and sense, and sight
Illumined by a tense and inward light.

THE GROVE OF WATTLES.

The tide full-flood, kisses attainment's lips
 For just one moment ere it sees eclipse,
 And life has just one harvest of an hour
 When love puts forth its perfect-petalled flower,
 That was my tide full-flood, my goal attained,
 My brimming cup in one quick moment drained,
 That was my blossom hour, my gold on gold,
 My perfect moment whose unmatched mould
 Broke then for ever.

My Hidden Garden.

A hedge of silence shields it from the passer-by,
 We only hold its mystic key, my brooding heart and I,
 Here blow the lilies of my dreams, fair and unspotted yet
 In the sheltered place, where long ago their fragile stems
 were set.

O! dreams of youth unsullied
 By bitterness or strife,
 Dreams of the pure in spirit,
 Ye are the lilies of life.

MY HIDDEN GARDEN.

Lilies woven of sunlight,
And the silver woof of the rain,
A soul of immaculate purity
Incarnated again.

Lilies like snowflakes lying
Where never a foot hath trod,
Spotless fingers unravelling
The mysteries of God.

Dreams are the soul's white lilies
Fragrant and wet with dew,
They are the fairy visions
Earth dreamed when the world was new.

And here, where the silence feeds them,
Seen but by my heart and me,
The stainless lilies of my dreams
Blossom in purity.

And in my hidden garden grow brave flowers of romance,
Knights of imagination, with pennon, sword and lance,
They could not breathe the outer air, nor search for Holy
Grails,
But here their arms are strong, and here their chivalry
avails,

MY HIDDEN GARDEN.

Their gallant chargers paw the ground, their broidered
 banners fly
 As we buckle their golden armour on, my brooding heart
 and I.

And here, in my hidden garden, is a doubly-sheltered
 shrine
 Where all the sunshine of all the years is garnered, and
 is mine,
 For on a tree enchanted a single blossom glows
 And lights the world with regal warmth, 'tis Love's own
 crimson rose.

O! Rose of Love, red Rose of Love,
 Dyed with a heart's emotion,
 The subtle fume of thy crimson bloom
 Like a necromancer's potion
 Kindles the fire in my passionate veins
 And lights like a torch my being,
 Reveals new joys, and new powers to feel
 New worlds, and new eyes for seeing,
 Till I lose myself, and can only find
 Where my life and its hopes were planted
 A universe, stored with the glamour poured
 From a blood-red rose enchanted.

MY HIDDEN GARDEN.

And here in a shadowy alley where no alien footsteps
tread
Like cool green moss on my bruised heart grow my
memories of the dead,
Softer than farewell kisses, cooler than twilight's
shade
They cover, with tender verdure the scars that death hath
made,
Mosses and golden lichen, like sweet thoughts together
pressed,
Each delicate tuft a remembrance flowering among the
rest,
Thoughts that I dare not face elsewhere smile at me in
the gloom,
And from seeds of bitter pain there springs this miracle
of bloom.

And here is a lake of crystal where I bathe my soul and
lave,
Naked and unashamed in its unpolluted wave,
A pure and plumbless lake wherein, Self, like a pebble
cast
By a mighty hand, sinks down, down, down, and is out of
sight at last.

MY HIDDEN GARDEN.

And here, in my hidden garden, safe-hedged from the
 passers-by
 We wander for many a lovely hour, my brooding heart
 and I.

Bellbirds.

You remember how we heard them
 In those quiet woodland dells,
 Tiny grey-green songsters ringing
 In the air their elfin bells.

Bellbirds! bellbirds! magic cadence,
 Thin and sweet beyond compare
 Like the footfall of a fairy
 Tinkling down a silver stair,

Or a string of rounded sea-pearls
 Swinging on a slender thread,
 Interlacing, softly jangling
 In the tree-tops overhead.

BELLBIRDS.

Or a tiny crystal runnel
Dropping down from stone to stone,
With a liquid splash of music
Into fairy bubbles blown.

Bellbirds! bellbirds! through the weaving
Of that sweet tautology
Runs a linking note of beauty
Tuned to some high symphony,

Far beyond your narrow vision,
Far beyond my larger view,
Yet the key-note has been given
As an instinct unto you.

And for you, O! happy bellbirds,
Life itself is harmony,
All your will, and all your duty
Is just happily to be,

Just to be—a simple charter
With the freedom of the sky,
Powers to wishes finely suited
Pinions, and desire to fly.

BELLBIRDS.

Served by morning's airy lackeys,
 Catered for by flower and tree,
 Little despots of the woodland,
 Sceptred by a melody!

My Country.

Sod sown with happy little flower faces,
 Singing of shallow creeks in ti-tree shaded places,

Giant boles of ragged bark in chocolate soils embedded,
 Flickering gleams of shine and shade on laughing breezes
 threaded,

Golden rain of wattle, fairy globes of perfumed
 splendour
 Waking wordless harmonies, and childish longings tender,

This was My Country, cradle, home, Australia, the nearest
 To Paradise of all the earth, my country, best and dearest.

MY COUNTRY.

Then, rising through these rosy mists, a clearer, sharper
vision,

A definite conception soon emerging with precision,

My Country, now no longer just a place for happy living,
But asking more, and in return a poignant rapture giving,

My Country, mine, yet other, strange, and may be hostile
nations,

Mine only one of many composite creations.

Yet mine, more mine! hot blood aflame, asking just to
defend her

And the dear sum of all my joy unshrinkingly to lend
her,

For so the young heart seeks to pour its own insurgent
glory

Into a splendid deed, and write its memorable story

In letters that itself can read by native intuition,
And through its own fused passions bring ideals to fruition.

My Country! as she lies within the circling arms of ocean
The thought of her was islanded in the deeps of my
emotion.

MY COUNTRY.

And like her matchless cobalt skies my spirit brooded
 over

As broods the deeper instincts in the passion of a lover,

And from the warm moist pregnant soil teeming with
 seeds of beauty

There germinated one live plant—the thin straight stalk
 of Duty.

My Country is myself, in me she falls or is exalted.

I am a grain of the true salt wherewith she must be
 salted.

I am my country, and in me her spirit is reflected,

My character and hers are indissolubly connected.

This is the lesson that I learned, a sharp one and a bitter,
 The naked path of honour, stripped of its metricious
 glitter,

An ardent love of country lighted by poetic fervour,
 But with the deeper knowledge that to love her is to
 serve her

Not only when by foes beset her need becomes my honour,
 Not only when I openly may spend my best upon her,

MY COUNTRY.

But through slow years of peace wherein her life in mine
I nourish
And she must sink, as sink my aims, or flourish as they
flourish.

The Patriot is no sudden flower that war's red soil produces
Spontaneously, long years the seed lies ripening for its
uses

In silence and obscurity, its life shut fast within it
Till the heroic moment brings the hero forth to win it.

To sow this seed, and foster it with every high endeavour
That deep beneath all other thoughts its roots may live
for ever,

This is the patriotie love with which I would possess her,
My Country! kernel of my heart! Australia! God bless
her!

Sydney Harbour.

Thy beauty is an entity, coherent and endued
 With more intricate essences than Nature ever brewed,
 She truly made the lovely mould with cunning workman-
 ship,
 But a potent spirit brims it unto its carven lip,
 An individual presence that informs, as with a soul,
 Thy vital harmonies, and makes of thee a perfect whole.

Thou art a consummated wish, a craving satisfied,
 The heart is subject unto thee, and rises with thy tide,
 Its hidden joys dance visibly thy rippling curves among
 And through thine ocean gates into profundity are flung.

Thou art achievement, and to thee the sense of beauty
 kneels
 As to a benediction, the lucid moon reveals
 In confidential midnights thy secrets to the waves
 That lisp in silver syllables against thy wind-swept caves.

The clouds store up thy memory, and from the unquiet
 sea
 Float in, like homing thoughts of peace to hover over
 thee,

SYDNEY HARBOUR.

Or, yearning as a lover yearns for the lips he once has
kissed

They stoop and clasp thee in their arms of woven fog
and mist.

The hours are all thy servitors, and bring at thy behest
Their opal flagons filled with wine to pledge the amorous
west,

Or ringed with pearls of dawning, or shod with golden
shoon

They open all the azure gates of morn and eve and noon.

And night's own wonder-blossoms, emerald, orange, red,
Upon the silky, sliding dark their glowing petals shed,
Roses of living ruby bud upon their shadowy boughs
And weave a glittering coronal for thine imperial brows.

And mapped, and curbed, and fettered, and scored by
myriad keels

Who measures thy capricious moods or thy decree
repeals?

Thy thirsty spirit quaffs and quaffs from its great cup
the sea

And brimming with the vital draught knows no satiety.
Thy giant heart deep pulsing through every emerald vein
Links thee to cosmic forces that never wax nor wane.

SYDNEY HARBOUR.

And when, like sudden wolves unleashed, the ravening
southerlies
Rush from their vaporous caverns set in white Antaretic
seas,
Thy mettle answers, and the frothy spume of battle flies
With thundrous blows, and ringing shouts up to the
troubled skies.

Strange echoes haunt thy silences, and when the dim
stars drowse
Thy ripples feel the stealthy push of unrecorded prow,
And eldrieh laughters ring along thy shadow-muffled
shore,
Laughters re-echoing from rocks that they have known
before,
And things that shun the daylight curdle the shuddering
air.
Who knows thee best knows only how little he can share
Thy elemental mystery, or with all his wisdom guess
Why the hand that made thee chose to use such needless
loveliness.

Thou art a challenge to the soul, a trust to chivalry
A touchstone for the human heart and its nobility.

SYDNEY HARBOUR.

How shall the ages find thee whom Time's hand cannot
dim?

*By the measure of man's grace to thee, God mete again
to him.*

Insurrection.

Come to heel, body. Come to heel!
Who and what are you to steal,
The birthright of your betters. Are you heir
To immortality and do you dare
To wield the sceptre and repeal
The laws of precedence? Come you to heel.

Down, down, I tell you, know your place,
No mere usurper of plebeian race
Shall sit upon my will's imperial throne
And exercise the powers that are my own.
Ay! though your claims to sovereignty seem very real
You are my slave and subject. Come to heel!

INSURRECTION.

There in your place, fear not, I'll treat you well,
 All in my territory safely dwell.
 Those rebel hordes the senses, I shall train
 To military service, they shall reign,
 My loyal viceroys and my orders seal
 With prompt obedience. Come to heel!

No compromise can be between we two,
 One must be master—and it is not you,
 Poor temporary instrument of an hour
 Clutching so greedily the reins of power.
 Only by your surrender am I free to deal
 With matters that concern me much. Good body, keep
 to heel.

Some and Some.

Some sit in the sun and spin
 Threads very fine and thin,
 And they are heavy-hearted,
 If this strand should be parted,
 Or that one run awry
 By the flicker of an eye.
 They weave their threads so frail
 Into a flimsy veil

SOME AND SOME.

That hangs between their senses, and the real universe
 And in the fingers of the spinner
 The threads grow ever finer, thinner,
 Too thin to bear the burden of a blessing or a curse.
 And still they sit aloof,
 And wrap them in the woof
 Of the fabric they have spun.
 Ay, some sit in the sun
 And spin. Oh! God, am I one?

And some sit in the shade
 That want and sin have made,
 And fight for very breath
 With forces worse than death.
 Real, ah! very real
 Are the horrors that they feel,
 Doomed to toil's consuming altars,
 Strangled by prenatal halters,
 Fed for death by tainted blood
 Jetsam of the human flood!
 Perishing like summer flies
 Amid their own unheeded cries.
 Ay! some sit in the shade
 That want and sin hath made,
 And some sit in the sun and spin
 Threads very fine and thin.

An Empty Glass.

"And when thyself, with shining foot shall pass
Among the guests star-scattered on the grass
And in thy joyous errand reach the spot
Where I made one . . . turn down an empty glass."

—OMAR KHYAM.

STANZA LXXV.

Dramatis Personæ—

HORTENSE TERRY - *Once a trained nurse.*

MABEL FRERE - *Trained nurse.*

MAX ARNOLD - *Barrister.*

ROSE ARNOLD - *His wife.*

SCENE I.

[*Hortense Terry, seated alone in sitting-room of a Woman's Club. She is a tall, handsome woman, elegantly dressed. She paces the floor restlessly, then takes up a pen to continue some correspondence. Throws it down suddenly and recommences pacing to and fro.*]

HORTENSE—

Yes! yes! I knew life had its deserts, dry,
Waterless, and wracked by fierce simoons.
I never thought to pine in one myself,
To feel its searing winds upon my heart,
So long beneath the palm trees have I dwelt
Hearing the ripple of a living stream

AN EMPTY GLASS.

Laving a living shore. An outcast! I?
 Who dared to say it? Yet what would I care
 To be pariah in this empty world
 If still I reigned imperially to him?
 Ah! that is where it cuts deep, deep, into
 The very essence of me. It has come,
 The blight my prescience saw while yet the flower
 Ravished my senses with its matchless bloom.
 Illicit love holds at its very core
 The canker that destroys it, and, Oh! well
 I knew within the kernel of my mind
 That I should some day pay a bitter price
 For these dear dreams. Only to think of them
 Will sanctify the Hades still to come.

Hades? ah! A woman scorned——
 Yes, let her tell of Hades, she who knows.
 To leave me thus—Oh, coward blow!
 Tear out my heartstrings, let the jagged ends
 Still quiver on, ay! crush my demon pride
 'Gainst any iron wheel of circumstance,
 My fortitude would fail not, so I saw
 The hand that slew me was the hand I love.
 But Max! to stab me with this poisoned blade
 Of silence. Just to drop me in the void

AN EMPTY GLASS.

Without a word or sign—too light to stir
 The balance of his careless memory,
 Too light to shake the poisoning of his mind.
 I, who have known to stand within his soul
 And see myself in beauty mirrored there.
 I who have known—Oh! turn my living brain
 To chaos, blast my very power to think
 So only I am kept from thoughts like these—
 And yet—and yet——

[Enter, hurriedly, Mabel Frere. Looks round, nods shortly to Hortense. Goes into adjoining room, returns, throws herself into a chair, grasping her temples with both hands.]

NURSE FRERE—

“Oh Heavens! this is awful! simply awful,
 What shall I do? Where is she? Idiot! Fool!
 To break her word at such a time! My head!
 Whatever shall I do?

[Goes to telephone, rings up, then drops receiver and walks distractedly about.]

[To Hortense, who has resumed her writing.]

AN EMPTY GLASS.

NURSE FRERE—

Did you—? Oh! have you seen Nurse Grey—you know
 Emmie? Nurse Grey? has she been here to-day?
 She promised she'd be here at three—my head!
 Oh! heavens! it will split. She said—she said——

HORTENSE [*coldly*]

Yes, she was here, not half an hour ago,
 She said to tell you that she had been called
 Quite suddenly—her brother's child is ill,
 And dying, I should judge by what she said.
 The message came for her when she was here.
 A child she seems to dote on—had some fit—
 They needed her at once. She seemed to lose
 Her head, as you have done, and rushed away.
 I said I'd tell you how the thing occurred,
 That is her basket, she will send for it.

NURSE F.—

She had to go? What foolery! She knew
 That I was counting on her—left my case
 Sure she would take it. What am I to do?
 And who am I to get, I'd like to know?
 There's no one—every single nurse engaged,

AN EMPTY GLASS.

My head is splitting—to upset my plans—
 For some ridiculous child, and leave me here
 Mad with neuralgia! What am I to do?
 She said she'd go—I told them she'd be there
 Within an hour—and Mrs. Arnold said——

HORTENSE—

Who?

NURSE F.—

Why, Mrs. Arnold. Oh, my head! my head!

HORTENSE—

Silence about your head. Now tell me quick
 What Arnold? Who is ill? and when? and how?

NURSE F.—

You needn't break my arm, your grip's like steel,
 You make me feel quite sick, leave go I say!
 It's Mr. Arnold, Max, the barrister,
 Oh! but you hurt! and typhoid—virulent.
 He's very bad, in fact, he can't be worse,
 Delirious, and a shocking temperature.
 I take the night—his wife—you know they are
 Just lately married—she's an heiress, too,

AN EMPTY GLASS.

They say that's why he—oh! at any rate
 She takes the nursing in the day—insists—
 And will not have another nurse. I knew
 The work would fall on me. You know how 'tis,
 You dare not trust them, and you work and work,
 And then neuralgia gripped me, and for days
 I've just been crazy, and I *must* have sleep,
 And Emmie Grey—I rang her up, she said
 She'd come and take him for me till my head
 Was better. Now the wretch! what shall I do?
 The doctor will be savage too, I know,
 He's such a fidget, and he will not have
 A nurse who is a stranger, and it seems
 That all his own are fully occupied.
 This influenza raging everywhere—
 I got him to consent to Emmie Grey;
 Altho' he never saw her, he has heard
 About her, and he said that she would do.
 I rang her up, she said she'd meet me here
 At three, and take it on, and now—and now——

HORTENSE—

Oh hush! you whining woman, listen now,
 With all your ears. [*Aside*: My heart! 'tis only
 death!

AN EMPTY GLASS.

Poor mortal death I have to fight against,
 And I shall conquer, darling. I shall snatch
 Your life from his cold clutches, and within
 The warm core of my heart renourish you.
 Oh! typhoid! only typhoid—virulent—
 Oh, only this, and not forgetfulness.]
 [*Aloud*] Who is the doctor?

NURSE F.—

Lamont of Worthington, and Templer called
 In consultation, and they speak of Dix,
 But what's the good of keeping me in talk
 And wasting all my time? Here, let me go—
 Hortense! I must, I've got to find a nurse.

HORTENSE—

Be silent! let me think. The doctors—h'm—
 They never saw me—that's alright, and Grey,
 Emmie—yes—lucky! she is dark—
 And much my height, and here's her luggage—Yes,
 This basket. Open it. Don't be a fool.
 Obey me instantly. That's better. Now—
 These skirts—exactly right, the very length,
 And blouses, collars, cuffs, and aprons, caps,
 I do not like the aprons, you shall go

AN EMPTY GLASS.

And buy me others later. Ninny! cease,
 I tell you I shall save you by my plan.
 Now listen. You—you, Mabel Frere, you poor
 Neuralgie victim. You know who I am?

NURSE F.—

I know you were a nurse. I know we lived
 Together once. But that was long ago.
 'Tis years since I have seen you. You are changed,
 Much changed. They say that you have been abroad,
 I don't know where, and have, they say, become——

HORTENSE—

Yes, been abroad, and have, they say, become——?

NURSE F.—

Well, something of a beauty, and have left
 Our poor profession, that is all I know,
 Or want to know, you always frightened me.
 You were so headstrong, and so passionate,
 And now, what is it that you mean to do?

HORTENSE—

You know I was a nurse. Now, do you know
 What kind of nurse? a good one? or a poor?
 Successful may be? or obscure—as you?

AN EMPTY GLASS.

NURSE F.—

I never nursed with you, how can I know?

HORTENSE—

'Tis to your interest that you know. Recall
What you have heard. Did I rank high or low?

NURSE F.—

Oh high! you know. What use to bother me?

HORTENSE—

You may perhaps remember to have heard
What Dr. Randall used to say of me?
Yes? You remember? I am glad. Now think,
Would you consider me as competent
To take this case as any nurse you know?

NURSE F.—

Why! why—I never thought you meant—you see,
'Tis years since you have nursed, I cannot know——

HORTENSE—

Ah! but I understood that you did know.
Just think again, and tell me if you could
Quite safely recommend me in your place?

AN EMPTY GLASS.

NURSE F.—

Oh! yes, no doubt I could, but what of it?

HORTENSE—

This of it, I am going to take your ease
 And nurse your patient while you get a rest.
 It does not suit me that my real name
 Should be disclosed, so I shall take these things,
 Nurse Grey's, her basket, and her uniform,
 And call myself Nurse Grey, and you shall guard
 This secret with your life. Oh yes! you shall,
 You'll say you never saw the basket here,
 Suggest it has been stolen, gone astray.
 You'll take these sovereigns, and buy postal notes
 And send them to Nurse Grey without a word
 Or sign of any kind, 'twill recompense.
 And you will say, when the occasion comes,
 That some one found a nurse, you do not know
 Exactly who it was—some Melbourne girl.
 Call black things white, and never turn a hair,
 And guard this secret as you do your life.
 If you betray me—you—you—Mabel Frere,
 Or by a careless word let drop a hint,
 I'll pay you, never fear! I'll pay you well.

AN EMPTY GLASS.

There's more in this than you can understand.
More hangs on it than your poor head can guess.
It matters not to you what it may mean,
But keep this thought before you all the time,
That if it fails, 'twere better you were dead.
Your memory of me is not good, I know,
But you'll remember that I keep my word.
Remember also that I never ask
For service unrequited. You shall have
The fees I earn, yes, every penny piece
Shall go to you, and here's a week's advance.
It happens, happily, my purse is full,
And that same purse is deeper than it was
In those old days you know of. I shall see
You do not suffer. If you ring me up,
Or write to me, or drop the faintest hint,
Or let my name leak out in any way,
You'll learn what kind of thing I call revenge.
Now I shall go and get a drug for you,
That will relieve your head, and you must stay
Here till I come. Lie there and wait for me.
Then you shall tell me details of the case
That I may know just where to take it up,
Now you can ring up Mrs. Arnold, say

AN EMPTY GLASS.

Nurse Grey is leaving, will be at her house
In half an hour. Wait here till I return.

[*Exit Hortense.*]

NURSE F.—

Good heavens! what a woman! What will come
Of this God knows. For me I do not care,
I'm wax between her fingers. How she looked!
She frightens me. A tigress. Oh my head!

ACT II.

[*Max Arnold's sick room. Arnold in bed, mutters deliriously. Mrs. Arnold anxiously tries to calm him. Enter Hortense in nurse's uniform, attends to something at end of room.*]

MAX—

Oh moon of my delight, who knowest no wane,
Oh moon of my delight, oh moon! oh moon!—
What was it that I said? What was it, Rose?

ROSE ARNOLD [*weeping*].—

Oh, nothing, dearest. 'Twas not anything,
Just some—some idle words about the moon.

AN EMPTY GLASS.

Nothing of consequence. Now will you take
A spoonful? only one, my dearest, try!

MAX—

No! No! I hate it. Go, leave me alone,
Oh! hot as Hades! What's the use? Too hot,
Too hot, I tell you. So, your Honour, as
The plaintiff used the words with that intent
'Tis useless to deny that now he is——
Among the guests star-scattered on the grass,
And when thyself with shining foot shall pass,
And in thy joyous errand reach the spot
Where I made one, turn down—turn down—turn
down——

Oh turn down what? Oh! tell me quickly what?
I've searched so long, all down the lonely lanes
Long, and so lonely and so burning hot——
Surely you know? thy shining foot shall pass
Thy slender shining foot, and reach the spot
Where I made one, turn down—turn down—turn
down——

HORTENSE—

An empty glass, turn down an empty glass,
But not until you drink this medicine.

AN EMPTY GLASS.

Yes—that is right. Now you can go to sleep.
 A little sleep, a little quiet sleep,
 There now, that's cooler. Now you'll go to sleep.

[*Patient ceases muttering; takes medicine; and dozes.*]

MRS. ARNOLD—

Why, Nurse! That's magic! How was it you knew?
 Or did you only guess? I never can.
 I cannot follow when he talks like that,
 So incoherently. I only seem
 To irritate him. When you spoke he turned
 As if you'd touched a spring, then lay quite still.
 Nurse Frere could never soothe him as you do.
 How wonderful! He raves sometimes for hours,
 And I can only cry, and make him worse.
 He's very ill. If you could only know
 The dreadful change I see in him. Oh dear!
 He's just a wreck. He has such lovely eyes,
 And is so gay and handsome, when he's well.
 What is it in your voice that soothes him so?

HORTENSE—

Oh! just a little knack
 I have with children and with invalids.
 You must not stay to talk. You're overwrought,

AN EMPTY GLASS.

You see that I can manage him. Now go
 And get some rest and I will let you know
 If he should wake. This little quiet sleep
 Will help him greatly. I will let you know,
 Yes! Yes! I promise, when the Doctor comes.

[*Exit Mrs. Arnold.*]

[*Hortense steps quietly about arranging chart, light, etc. Then kneels beside the bed, takes patient's head on her arm, saying softly*—

Max! Beloved! How his fevered soul
 In all its blind delirium knew my voice,
 And answered. Oh! my lover, fallen low!
 I hold him in the hollow of my hand
 For all his legal bonds, his home, his wife,
 His satisfied ambition, wealth, and power,
 His foot upon the giddy rungs of fame,
 And all those things for which he hungered so,
 Whose price was coined from his heart and mine,
 From all of these he turns heart-sick to me,
 A lost ship to its haven. In my voice
 His only comfort, and my breast his home.
 My brilliant barrister! My budding Judge!
 My rising star that lights the legal sky,

AN EMPTY GLASS.

My silver-throated orator whose proud
And eager hand, disdaining lesser things
Was stretched to pluck the very topmost fruit
Upon the topmost bough, and here it lies!
Content to clasp weak fingers in my own.
Oh Max, my lover! And shall I begrudge
This poor pale heiress all her legal rights,
Her shadowy status while I hold you thus
Linked to me by a chain she cannot break,
Unlawful though it be. He stirs! he wakes.
This is my only chance. If he is sane
I must so saturate his mind and brain
With this imposture that delirium shall
Not wrest the secret from him. Max! Dear Heart,
Hortense is here, these are her very hands,
This is her voice, these, Darling, are her lips.
Nay! but, my dearest, do not strangle me.
I will not go. I swear I will not go.
I've come to nurse you. You are very ill.
But I shall nurse you. Only listen, Max,
You must not say you know me. I'm Nurse Grey.
Remember just Nurse Grey, and no one else.
If you forget, yes, even once forget,
They'll send me far away. You understand?

AN EMPTY GLASS.

'Tis only by deception I can stay.
Nurse Grey! You *shall* remember.

MAX—

Nurse Grey? Yes! anything so that you stay.
May I die raving if my worthless tongue
Betrays the only name it loves. Hortense!
Where have I been? Oh, hold me, keep me, dear,
Back from those awful places. Cursed I am,
Cursed, to the very coward soul of me.
The depths that I have plumbed! Hortense! Hortense!
How have I slaughtered honour, by what vile
Unnatural crime have I divorced our lives,
A threefold murder, yours and hers, and mine.

HORTENSE—

Hush! Hush! You must not talk. You must not think.
Put all the past behind you. Just be still,
Remember I'm Nurse Grey. Know nothing more.
These ghosts that gibber at you, I can lay,
These wounds that fester in you, I can heal
With one touch of my hand. And here's a kiss,
A charm to keep you safe from evil thoughts.
Now sleep, my dearest. You shall soon be well.
Sleep quietly. I am watching. I will stay.

AN EMPTY GLASS.

[*Max sleeps. Hortense rises, examines medicines, reads directions on bottle, smells, and tastes the mixture.*]

HORTENSE—

So this is what they're giving him. I see.
 Ten drops in every hour. Here in my hand
 I hold the key of this entanglement.
 Ten drops, and weak and feeble as he is
 Another ten and all were over. Free
 His fettered life. My jealous heart assuaged.
 Another ten, and he would still be mine,
 The lover of my youth. My own! My own!
 That he should live means, let me think it out,
 A few sweet moments stolen from the dark,
 A flash of rapture edged with jagged pain,
 Slow convalescence. Kisses poison-sweet
 Caught at the verges of a sheer abyss,
 The hot blood boiling in my jealous veins
 At hideous tension. Just one fatal glance,
 One word unguarded, one untutored look,
 And scandal hundred-mouthed would grin at me.
 And if I should escape, there still would be
 The torture of her presence, and her voice,
 The note of ownership, her claiming hands,
 The imbecile unloosing of her tears,

AN EMPTY GLASS.

Her wifely rights. By heaven! I feel my teeth
Gritting already, as a lioness
Snarls in her throat at footsteps near her cubs,
And draws her muscles ready for the spring.
I was not made for such restraints as these,
I should go mad. And just another ten,
No alien hand should ever lie in his,
No lips taste his. He'd be forever mine
Through all the ages, and what easier
Than I to follow, plunging in the calm
And icy sea of Death this quivering brain
That only feels to suffer. Cold and still!
How subtly it invites and beckons me.
Max cold and still? and dead? Oh Max! and dead!
Corruption feeding on his kingly heart,
The beauty of his face and on the eyes
That light so quick with tenderness, death's scum
And horror upon horror. No! No! No!
I cannot see him dead. Alive and warm
And laughing in the sunlight. Quick and gay,
The red blood rioting along his veins,
A lustre on his close-clipped hair, my name
Springing in liquid syllables of love
Upon his lips. Yes! Yes! and he shall live
To love me still. To love me? Oh, my heart!

AN EMPTY GLASS.

Never and *never*. While these walls of flesh
 Shut in his spirit, while his being bends
 Beneath its laws, man-made and man-enforced,
 While the hereditary brand is stamped
 Upon his mind, so long shall such as I
 Be outlawed from the holiest heart of man.
 So have we bred them. Ay, they shrug and say
 Conventions are for women, made by them
 And kept alive. Absurd! A woman's heart
 Would brave the breaking of a thousand laws,
 A glorious rebel, if but love were true.
 But man! A something sits behind his heart
 And flinches should the world elect to sneer.
 A code elastic for his pleasures. Yes,
 And pathways broadly fashioned for himself,
 And tolerance for all outside the law.
 But for the woman who would share his name
 Another standard. Ever in his mind
 There stalks, though in the background, stark and stiff
 That instinct of conventionality.
 His gold must be hall-marked, his jewel set
 In flawless orthodoxy. Ah! I know
 That though I win his intellect and heart,
 That though his real life is all mine own,
 Yet I should miss that subtle something, hid

AN EMPTY GLASS.

Behind his passion, and behind his brain,
That faint aroma, holy to his sense
That should perfume the woman of his choice,
And mark her perfect fitness. Yes, and she,
This poor pale heiress—she is crowned withal
Standing on this immaculate pedestal.
With something all my beauty, all my power
Cannot attain. Yes. I could see him dead,
And better, better now than dumbly wait
To see the certain day of my eclipse.
I'll never see it! Now my hand is nerved
And I can do it. What's the body's death
When measured by the spirit's? We could pass
Together now, and never know the pang
That waits us living. Yes. I can. I shall.
But Max! Beloved! just one little look.
One glance at those shut eyelids melts my heart.
Live and be happy, darling. Let me pay
My bitter debt alone. Be happy. Live.
Remembering not my name: a name accursed.
And tread an even, blossom-bordered path
Beside your wife. His wife! her little child
That is to be! the crown of human love.
Her little child, that should be his and mine,
My heart is hungry for that little child,

AN EMPTY GLASS.

The immemorial instinct of my sex,
The mother in me never roused before,
Awakes and cries to hold that child, to feel
His life spring freshly from my own, and see
His eyes look at me while the little mouth
Clings to my breast. Oh, just to bear his child!
To link our lives with this so sweet a chain,
To watch the current of it mingled deep
Pass onward through the years and cheat decay
By sending through the ages still to come
Our vital spark, and so, incorporate,
Live on for ever. Ah! to hold his child,
How proud he'll be to think it is his own!
And when the day is done and he comes home
I'll hear his step quick ringing through the hall,
And then the sharp unlatching of the door,
So headlong, so impetuous, and he'll snatch
Us close within his arm—the boy and me—
And I shall feel our heart-beats trebled there.
He'll stoop his head, I know just how, and press
His lips upon the nestling downy head,
And I shall thrill through every fibre—thrill
And laugh up in his eyes. Oh God in Heaven!
The child will be *her* child, not mine, not mine.
Her breast will feel that little clinging mouth,
Her ear will know his step, and she will hear

AN EMPTY GLASS.

The trebled heartbeats. And for me, for me
 No child—no husband, just the unquiet ghost
 Of an evaporated passion. Now
 I know that I shall do it. Yes! yes! yes!
 I know that I am mad. So let me be.
 Here is the drug. Now let it do its work,
 I can endure no more, the time has come.

*[Walks towards bed, with bottle in hand, but avoids
 looking at Max.]*

The time? to slay my love? Oh Max! dear heart,
 I meant to kill you! God be merciful
 To me a sinner. Is it really true?
 I would have harmed him, cut the slender thread
 That links him to the living? Heavens above!
I meant to kill him. Can it then be true?
 What am I? and what stayed me? Sure there is
 An unseen arm doth hedge defenceless heads.
 Some spirit stirred, and roused me from my dream,
 My wicked dream of vengeance. I'm awake,
 Thank God, and I am sane. Hortense once more,
 A woman, not a fiend. And he shall live,
 And I shall like a noxious vapour fade
 And leave his life untrammelled. He shall be

AN EMPTY GLASS.

What he was meant to be, noble and good.
When I am gone, and I shall surely go—
Pass into silence utterly—he'll turn
And learn to love his wife. So men are made,
The best among them, and those little hands
I dreamed of—they will hold him close at home,
And draw the sting from memory, and light
A new and purer flame upon his hearth.
He'll plunge into his work, his fame will grow,
And he'll fulfil the promise of his life
With wife and child and home and wealth—and I—
Now God be merciful to me again,
And send some power to strengthen me. I know
That I am helped. My heart is lighter now
Than it has been for weeks. My thoughts are clear,
And I dare face them. Over my dead self
My foot steps firmly. Now 'tis time to see
My patient. Three o'clock! quite early yet,
And still he sleeps. I shall not waken him.
Five minutes more and 'twill be time to give
The ten drops as directed. Quietly
He still sleeps on. I'll kiss him once good-night.

[*Turns to bed.*]

AN EMPTY GLASS.

“Oh dearer, dearer than the ruddy drops
 That visit my sad heart——” But what? How cold!
 And pulseless! God above me! What is this?
 Dead! Max, my lover. No! he would not, could not
 die

And leave me lonely here. You know he loved me.
 Max!

Look up, and speak! No! No! for he is dead.
 A mightier hand than mine has loosed the knot,
 And I have lost him. Over the steep rim
 That fences in the living he is slipped
 Into the silence of the great abyss,
 And my wan voice shall echo through the world
 Forever without answer. Life and love
 Still surge within my heart, and on my lips,
 And his are sealed to silence and decay.
 And when thyself with shining foot shall pass—
 Turn down—turn down—turn down—an empty glass.

[*Falls fainting.*]

Song for the Departure of the Troops,

1901.

March, march, march, to the call of bugle and fife,
Kiss, kiss, kiss, your sweetheart or your wife,
Look, look, look at your friends as you pass them by.

And lift your face
To the matchless grace
Of your own Australian sky.
For your hands are at the plough, my lads,
And its quickstep forward now, my lads,
Let him who'd wear
The laurel care
That it shall fit his brow, my lads.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, our hearts keep time to your feet,
Quick, quick, quick, through the dear old narrow street,
Long, long, long we shall wait with ears astrain

For the music bred
Of this measured tread,
Ah! shall we wait in vain?
For our pride is all aflame, my lads,
We trust you with our name, my lads,
And if our cheers
Are mixed with tears
Their meaning's just the same, my lads.

SONG FOR THE DEPARTURE OF THE TROOPS.

Go, go, go, we have felt for ill or good,
 Sharp, sharp, sharp, the pangs of nationhood.
 You, you, you, who spring so gallantly
 From hut and hall
 At England's call,
 You shall our first fruits be.
 And this day shall leave a trace, my lads,
 That time shall not efface, my lads,
 Bethink you then
 To live like men,
 Or die as fits your race, my lads.

The Core of Time.

My path lies through an orchard, where the sun
 Filters among the heavy-laden boughs,
 I pass the ruddy fruit, and pluck not one,
 Dreaming, with deeply knitted brows
 Of God knows what, some fairer, finer trees
 Guarded, perchance, by some Hesperides,
 Or winnowing from the scented breeze

THE CORE OF TIME.

Some airy harvest of ideal fruits
Growing on curious trees that never threw
Into earth's homely breast their searching roots,
Or clean, sharp kisses of our sunshine knew.

And dreaming thus, with eyes thrown far afield
I miss the sweets that Fate had planned for me,
And curse the barren days that only yield
Unto my hands their native paucity;
And that rich harvest that I did not heed,
Whose fruits were fitted to my real need
Is vanished, and I have no garnered seed
To face the future with, and I discern
Too late, the nice adjustment of the soul
To its environment, and, weeping, learn
The value of each fragment to the whole;
This is the future that we have to-day,
This is the vision beautiful that now we see,
Each moment, when its husk is stripped away,
Reveals a hidden kernel—Opportunity.

SILHOUETTES

What the Wind Sang.

Oh, heard ye what the dawn-wind sang,
Clean from the crystal night?
It blew a new breath thro' the world,
And set the sun alight.
Oh, heard ye how it clarioned clear,
With all the world for scope?
A new soul flickered into life,
The dawn-wind sang of Hope.

Oh, heard ye how the noon-wind droned
And laughed in drowsy mirth?
The warm day drank a draught of gold,
And flung the dregs to earth.
A hawk poised in the lifted blue,
But little recked the dove.
She preened her breast in purity;
The wind sang "Love—ah! love!"

WHAT THE WIND SANG.

Oh, hear ye how the night-wind wails,
 All through the streaming dark?
 It whirls a white dust thro' the air,
 The ashes of a spark.
 Oh, hear ye how the night-wind wails
 In anguish scarce suppressed?
 A soul is rocking on its wings
 And cannot, cannot rest.

Love's Challenge.

The tightening of a saddle-girth,
 The buttoning of a glove;
 Now who could think such trifles worth
 The passion touch of love?

Saltbush on the windy plain,
 The clink of iron hoofs,
 Fictitious airs of sweet disdain,
 Half-serious reproofs—

LOVE'S CHALLENGE.

A cloud with rosy edges,
 A dim moon through the trees,
 And promises and pledges
 To last Eternities.

A quickening of the heart-beats,
 A faltering of the breath,
 And lip on yielding lip meets,—
 And Love has challenged Death.

For this the world was made and set
 Upon its wheeling way;
 For this the stars in Heaven are met,
 And Night displaceth Day.

For this, and this, and this again,
 Oh, little love of mine!
 Now who shall prate of grief and pain?
 And who shall ask a sign?

Your thoughts are wings that lift mine own
 Into a larger air,
 And odours sweet and strange are blown
 Through alleys, cool and fair,

LOVE'S CHALLENGE.

That lead to fairy meadows, deep
With purple flowers and white,
Where never Dawn disturbeth sleep
Nor Time reproves delight.

A fading of horizon bars,
Dusk veiling all the plain,
A star that beckons other stars
Nor beckons them in vain.

Impatient hoofs that paw the sand,
A softly-whinnied plea——
Love! lay in mine that little hand:
Life waits for you and me.

Through the Smoke of Bushfires.

I saw the long grey wreaths of smoke arise
And lie along the margin of the skies,
And float athwart the blue of heaven and fall
Across my vision like a mourner's pall.

I saw the seas and lands half hid in haze,
The city steeples and the forest ways,
And the broad bosom of the summer sea
Veiled like an Eastern maid in mystery.

No little glen but had its dim recess
Where shadows lurked in soft impassiveness,
No rocky headland but was pressed and kissed
Into oblivion by the swathing mist.

Till, all the world was as a dreamland shown,
And then I knew and marked it for my own,
The land my spirit loves, the land of dreams,
For which the heart for ever homesick seems.

The land with no horizons, where are laid
No ordered sequences of shine and shade,
No stiff processions of inveterate hours
Where dawns merge into days and buds to flowers.

THROUGH THE SMOKE OF BUSHFIRES.

Oh! land of dreams where all the maybes bloom
And breathe their faint, impalpable perfume,
Where gallant thoughts walk gaily, unafraid,
Where on unbroken heartstrings there are played

Those long-lost chords, those sweet, unuttered notes
That always have evaded human throats.
A land where even those who have no wings may fly
Where love knows all, yet never knows to die,

Where there comes forth an answer, when the soul
Interrogates its origin and goal.
As an exiled reindeer to the sea, or a white gull to the
foam,
My spirit turns oh! land of dreams, to thee, her only
home.

The Sting of Life.

Sorrow lies about us, crouching like a leopard fierce,
Ready, when we think it least our careless guard to pierce.

Our homes are built of human hearts, grief's hand is on
the latch,
Creep closer, lest that robber bold our happiness should
snatch.

Death is woven with our being, and can never fright the
soul
That accepts this phase of being as a fragment of the
whole.

And as day to day evolveth, and we weave our destiny,
The divinity within us calls unto the god to be.

Death, amid a thousand phantoms, stands invulnerably
true,
'Tis humanity's sole birthright, it belongs to me, to you.

Death we know, and we accept it, but, O! God! to see the
lips
Of a face we love grow pallid in pain's terrible eclipse,

THE STING OF LIFE.

And the eye that was our beacon flinching like a hunted
 thing,
 And a lovely mind in chaos—here, O! life—here is thy
 sting.

The Coward.

The little life, soft-moulded, that fits my circling arm,
 The little heart that leans on mine, and knows no sin nor
 harm,
 The little thoughts that I can guide, the days that I can
 plan,
 Yes, yes, this is my little son, but oh! my soul—a man!
 That complex riddle God has made, from which he seems
 to shrink,
 And turn his face, a man! to live, and fight, and strive,
 and think
 Thoughts that I cannot fathom, see sights I never saw,
 Dream dreams, and fight temptations, and make, or break
 the law.

THE COWARD.

A man! an arrow launched by me to pierce unmeasured
 space,
 And hit the mark, or miss and fail, and meet me face to
 face
 In some obscure hereafter—my heart shakes in my breast.
 Oh! let me keep my little child; I dare not face the rest.

The Universal Query.

Shall I awake some unexpected day, and feel my soul
 Shake off this drowsiness of living
 And watch a new horizon backward roll
 New boundaries to a new creation giving,
 And see night's fearful fancies fade away,
 Drowned in the sunlight of a real day?

Shall I awake unto a sudden sense of exquisite release
 From terrors half obscure, or wholly seeming,
 And realise by that benign surcease
 How drearily I have been dreaming?
 And watch the freshness of a true daybreak
 And draw deep breaths, and know I am awake?

The Thoroughfare of Souls.

The wind that cleaves an open road
Through endless plains of air;
This is the thoroughfare of souls,
This is their viewless stair.

No footfalls echo as they pass,
Oh! soft as velvet shod;
No footprints lie to mark the way
These phantom feet have trod.

No cry of greeting or farewell
Thrills through these silent aisles;
No whispered words, no hushed adieux,
No sad nor welcoming smiles.

Yet thick and fast, they meet and pass
Unto their unseen goals;
It is a crowded pathway, this,
The thoroughfare of souls.

A glimmer, as of falling dew
Or snowflake, flickering white;
And in some household, far below,
A child is born to-night.

THE THOROUGHFARE OF SOULS.

A grim shade, foul with memories,
Room for the leper. Room!
And through the shrinking lines it fares
Naked, unto its doom.

The warm earth lieth underneath,
Men toil and smile, or weep;
And ever these dim multitudes,
Their shadowy limits keep.

Along the azure paths they crowd—
A tide that ebbs and flows;
But who, or whence, or whither? Ah!
The wind, perchance, it knows.

The wind is all the voice they have.
It shrills, or moans, or sighs;
And breathes their messages to us,
Yet carries no replies.

You'll hear them whisper when, at dusk,
A shiver shakes the trees;
Then listen! never think 'tis but
The murmur of a breeze.

THE THOROUGHFARE OF SOULS.

The wind, the wind! it knoweth all,
As round the world it rolls;
We, too, shall tread, some happy day,
The thoroughfare of souls.

Love's Illusions.

I know a creek, a little creek
Hid in a hill's embraces,
Where they who still for Beauty seek
May find her lingering traces.
The willows, with long tresses bent,
Shadow the water over;
The air has caught a mystic scent—
Well, yes! perhaps it's clover!

I know a beach, a little beach
Of snowy sand, bespangled
With jewels, quaintly carven; each
In strange sea-growths entangled;

LOVE'S ILLUSIONS.

The wavelet softly breaks and curls,
 Singing in broken trebles,
 And stirs the opals and the pearls
 —Of course they *may* be pebbles!

I know a song, a lovely song,
 One happy thought expressing;
 I hear it rising, full and strong,
 The listening air caressing.
 No mortal knows so rare a tone,
 Nor lark in raptures airy; ·
 Some spirit 'tis that calls my own
 —They say it's only Mary!

A Newborn Infant.

Hush! draw thy breath slowly,
 This moment is holy,
 Touched with a splendour beyond human ken;
 For through this small portal
 A spirit immortal
 Pure and untainted descends among men.

A NEWBORN INFANT.

Oh! sweet incarnation!
Oh! flower of creation!
Oh innocent flame of new life undefiled,
On earth's poor breast falling
Her lost youth recalling
Oh! hope of humanity, soul of a child.

This lamp freshly lighted
By some power ignited,
This spark from some luminant out of our sight,
Hath surely some message,
Some hint or some presage
To flash on the gloom of our ignorant night.

Oh! spirit arrested
In flesh manifested
Not vainly thou comest from far as a sign.
Though doubt may deery it
And Science deny it,
We *know* that we see in thee something divine.

In Some Deep Wood.

Oh! if I only could.
Lie, self-effaced in some deep wood,
My breast against the moss, and feel
The great world underneath me wheel
In silence, while high overhead
Oceans of azure light were spread
As limitless in their expanses
As my own wild, and unchained fancies.

Day might decline, and all the trooping
Legions of stars come proudly stooping
To bend their golden eyes on me.
I should not know, I should not see,
And winds might with the blossoms marry
And flocks of little perfumes carry
From buds and bells whose breath entices
Each other bud to yield its spices.
And Time himself might pause, and slowly
Taste of the silence, solemn, holy.
I should not know, I should not care,
Content I'd be, just to be there,
Hushed to the very soul of me
By the great earth's maternity.

IN SOME DEEP WOOD.

Satisfied all my ambitions,
 Silenced all my premonitions,
 Every restless want fulfilled
 Every protestation stilled.
 Queries answered, doubts beguiled,
 Comforted as is a child,
 When, terrified by storm's alarms,
 It finds at last its mother's arms,
 And plunging in love's plumbless sea,
 Retastes its first nativity.
 Oh! if I only could,
 Lie self-effaced, in some deep wood!

Deduction.

Systems and theories fade,
 Others are slowly made,
 Life springs, and is destroyed,
 Riot reigns in the void,
 Yet under, without flaw,
 Lieth the Law.

DEDUCTION.

Types merge. A paradox
 All rule and order mocks.
 Confusion on confusion piles,
 Death looks at life and smiles,
 Yet under, without flaw,
 Lieth the Law

Deep as the searcher delves,
 Self within many selves,
 Each contradicting each
 Finds, past all human speech,
 Yet under, without flaw,
 Lieth the Law.

Nothing that brain can think
 Passeth beyond its brink,
 No matter, and no mind
 Its boundaries can find,
 A madman's maddest scheme,
 A mystic's highest dream,
 Nature—the thing we see,
 And all invisibility
 Answer without flaw
 Unto the Law.

DEDUCTION.

It is the base upon
Which rests phenomenon,
And since the Law by what
Or whom was it begot?
Reason! stand and deliver,
Here's Law. Name the Law-giver.

Hidden Deeps.

Every man in the deep of his heart
Knows of a secret sin,
That taps at the door of his meanest self,
And seeketh a home therein.
That lingers about with a luring smile,
And, oust it howe'er he may,
Leaveth a taint on his inmost thought,
And returneth another day.

Every man, in the deep of his heart,
Hideth a secret grave,
Where lieth himself as he meant to be.
Over it wild winds rave,

HIDDEN DEEPS.

And moan in the hush of the starless night,
When ghosts are quick in the gloom,
And he steals away from the haunts of men
To watch by that nameless tomb.

Every man in the deep of his heart
Nurseth a feeble spark,
That flickers and fails as the drear winds blow,
Yet always survives the dark;
And if he will shield it with steady hand,
Though nearer the storm-clouds roll,
It will gather strength, till it shines at last
A star to his passing soul.

Futility.

I have some thoughts like birds that hover near me,
 And flutter wings, impatient for a flight,
 Yet is the limit of my mind, I fear me,
 Too small to let them mount and fly aright.

Oh! human soul, why lags thy best endeavour
 Ever to pierce the blue of its desire?
 Chained to thy poor mortality can'st never
 Reach those fair heights to which thou can'st aspire?

Was it that hunger pangs might devastate thee
 That this capacity for spiritual food was lent?
 And these fine reasoning powers that so elate thee
 For what ulterior uses were they sent?

Was it to beat them 'gainst the bars of being
 That wings to cleave the upper air are thine?
 Was it to show thee the futility of seeing
 Thine inward eye was made so clear and fine?

Oh! mystery of life, oh! riddle of creation,
 Who hath the key that shall thy fate reveal?
 Age after age in silence and negation
 Time stands and turns his endless wheel.

FUTILITY.

Nature, thy foster-mother, hears thy bitter chiding,
Laughs at thy sullen brow and useless spleen,
Till Death draws down his sombre curtain, hiding
Thy spent existence deep in the unseen.

And to thy frantic cry of whence, and wherefore,
And why, and whither makes a cold reply—
“Life feeds on death, it nourished thee, therefore
Thou also, in due time, must surely die.”

SONNETS

Sydney Harbour.

Who has not seen thee lacks so fair a thing
That I am fain to pity him, although
So like a comrade doth thy beauty grow
Into my life, that leaving thee must bring
A real grief. Thy voice, low murmuring
Of sunkissed waters, many a time I know,
Will hurt my memory like a sudden blow
As through my heart its haunting echoes sing;
I will not see one bar of slanting gold
But will recall how fair it fell on thee
As, dimpling round thy fretted emerald shores
Thou didst the flowers reflect, or dashing bold
'Gainst rocky headlands an imperious knee
Thundered, with foaming hand at Heaven's doors.

Sydney Harbour.

To love thee, and to leave thee! Joy and pain
True balanced, for thy regal beauty lies
Not throned a day-queen in my passing eyes,
But bedded in my heart. A golden lane
Of memory leads me to thy shores again,
I see thy heaving purple breast that sighs
Its amorous waves against the shore and tries
To kiss the flowers that overhang, in vain,
I used to love thy gleaming garments best
When trailing through the dipping woods they lay
And caught the saffron glamour of the west,
Until I saw thee decked in soft array
Of ebon shadows, and thy glittering crest
Grown pensive 'neath the young moon's silver sway.

A Hot Wind Day in Spring.

Oh what a cruel and outrageous thing
That in the midst of silken airs like these,
When, to the wooing of a honied breeze
The delicate wistaria blossoms swing
Their drooping tresses o'er the wall and fling
A lavender enchantment, while the trees
Are full of snowy promise, and the bees
Impatient round the buds are clustering,
That such a furious wind as this should rise
And my fair garden into ruin throw
With whirling buffets from the brazen skies;
Oh piteous life! that lives but to bestow
The seeds of death, and bid us realise
All things are vain save Him who made them so.

Sursum Corda.

There came one softly to me in the night
And said "Why hast thou left me long alone?
In all thy lovely meadows is there sown
One immortelle? Hast marked in eagles' flight
One wing that pierced the blue, or has thy sight
Caught even once a smile so fearless grown
That tears might never quench it? Hast thou known
One voice that Silence claims not as her right?
Oh! wherefore waste thy soul for such as these
When I await thee? When this hand is thine
Wilt cling to shadows? Wherefore drink the lees
When at thy very lips I pour forth wine?
Oh piteous one! *I only am.* In me
Thy meaning lies, and thy reality."

To My Friend.

Why did you leave your door ajar that day
That any wandering foot might enter there?
That any thief and robber who might dare
To pass could steal what most you prized away?
Why did you leave your heart ajar that they
Who dared might entrance to it win and share
Its hoarded treasure? They who have should care
To keep, nor carelessly their wealth display.
An open door doth robbery invite,
I, passing, paused and entered in your door
Since it was open, so into your heart
I stepped, and now though you may shut it tight
You only shut me in. Ah, never more
Though thief and robber shall I now depart.

The Quiet Lake of Sleep.

When dusky shadows have usurped the air
And Memory, with her wide and sombre eyes
Haunts every nook—I silently arise
And steal away by dreamy paths to where
Like holy incense in a house of prayer
A peace perfected softly sanctifies
The place with silence, never winds arise
Nor passion storms invade the quiet there,
But through the limpid depths my tired soul
Slips into restfulness, and on my brow
A hand from heaven is laid. Like folded sheep
My thoughts lie down in pastures, and the roll
Of wheeling worlds sinks to a slumbrous sough
That ruffles not the quiet lake of sleep.

The Spirit of Poetry.

O strange and subtle soul of Poetry
 Of what ethereal essence art thou made?
 Where garnered? Where distilled? In some quaint
 glade
 Ahaunt with elfin eyes art wont to be?
 Or, like a pearl in thought's unfathomed sea
 Art thou embedded? Wherefore dost evade
 With coy reluctance like a timid maid
 Our eager and impassioned quest for thee?
 Oh! fainter than the fall of fairy feet,
 Oh! deeper than the wave's world-echoing roll,
 More exquisite, miraculous, divine,
 Than fragrance in a flower, or the fleet
 Aroma of a dream, thou art a soul
 Within the soul's imperishable shrine.

A Sprig of Mint.

A sprig of mint, an herb of lowly sort
For homely usages designed, and yet
When I have pressed a leaf, in idle sport
Between my fingers, straight I am beset
By haunting childish memories, on a wet
And fragrant bank of mint I lie, athwart
The creek, the snowy ti-tree blooms are met,
And fleets of fallen petals are in port;
An elfin charm is filtered through the air,
A hum of cloistered gnats in emerald cells
With drowsy chantings that the gadflies share,
And this sad heart that on a sudden swells
At the remembered fragrance was it there
And did it lie and dream as fancy tells?

A Missing Ship.

When thou didst slip thy cable, and with pride
Of windfilled canvas curtsy to the shore
A white farewell, our reason half denied
The miracle thou wast, for custom more,
And more doth blind us. We, because it wore
Familiar features, scorned thy majesty;
And hadst thou won, as oft thou didst before
Thy haven in unchecked prosperity
We had not heeded, nor remembered thee.
But now! Oh phantom! where and what art thou?
In what strange realms of pale green mystery
Has ocean welmed thee and thy masters now?
In some deep caverns, slumbrous with his breath
Perchance he holds thee, wrapped in tranquil death.

Slow Falling Rain at Night.

Who *is* it weeping? I could think I hear
The gathered grief of all the world expressed
In this slow rain, and every single tear
That ever fell from human eye invest
The night with pathos—Surely bitterest
The grief that inarticulate doth speak
This language of despair, too brave to wrest
A transient balm from utterance, yet too weak
To bear in silence—Mayhap when the bleak
Night winds have ceased to fret the mournful air
And stillness falls, then haply did we seek
Some spirit we might find, who, wandering there
Up-garners in her heart all human pain
And weeps for us in this slow falling rain.

Evening Primroses.

My little hill looks westward to the sea,
I know not how it fareth through the day,
But when the hours, like tired children lay
Their golden heads against the shadowy knee
Of their sweet mother Twilight—drowsily
Uplifting rosy hands as if to pray,
My little hill then hureth me away
And holds my spirit in an ecstasy.
For, swaying each upon its slender stem
There grow the purest flowers that ever gazed
With open eyes into a human soul,
My little hill, thy primrose diadem
In crowning thee hath thoughts within me raised
That reign like kings, and conquer all control.

Misapprehension.

The air was ripening in a mellow haze,
And summer filled the blue cup of the sky
With magic wine, and all the woodland ways
Were rich with blossom, and my heart and I
Were glad together. Then, upon mine ear
There fell a sudden buzzing, and my breath
Was stayed with horror for that even here
Was death and loathly lives that live on death!
Oh fearful heart! why must thou ever cast
Thy shadow on the sunshine and endue
Potential good with evil? Shrill and sweet
The buzz became a murmur, till at last
It swelled into a pæan and I knew
'Twas *honey*, not corruption at my feet.

Calm in Storm.

There came a sudden storm upon the sea,
And lashing rains whipped white across the spray
That tossed about our oars, and, dim and gray
The clouds leaned down to thunder angrily.
Then through the murky air all suddenly
Then came the light of stars, the warmth of day,
The honied scent of every flower of May,
Because, oh love! thy face was turned to me
And in thine eyes I saw my stars, and by
The crimson of thy cheek my dawn was lit,
And by thy breath I knew that spring was nigh,
And—such is love's unconquerable spell—
That while the seas and skies with rage were split,
A lovely silence round my spirit fell.

To My Friend.

When from the turmoil of the busy mart
I chanced to turn and cross your open door
My spirit, weary of the load it bore,
All uninvited, slipped into your heart
And found its home. No more I trod with start
And tremble at my loneliness, no more
Each face the alien look of Ishmael wore,
And I among my fellows stood apart;
There is a cup for every acorn grown,
There is an echo somewhere for each sound,
Methinks God made his souls in this design
To take the sting from that dread word "alone,"
No acorn fits its cup in perfect round
No echo answers sound, as thy soul mine.

Old Age.

I will not weep because my day has waned
And brought the twilight, though the long long years
That lie beyond, and are so deeply veined
With light and shadow and the dew of tears
Tug at my heart and bid me glance behind,
Still shall I strive to meet the gathering gloom
With an unfaltering heart, and mayhap find
Across my path some lingering flower in bloom;
There is no road of all our eyes have seen
So smooth and peaceful as the homeward way,
There is no hour of all the glittering day
So sweet as twilight, and methinks between
The lights of time and of eternity
A benediction shall encompass me.

Childish Intuition.

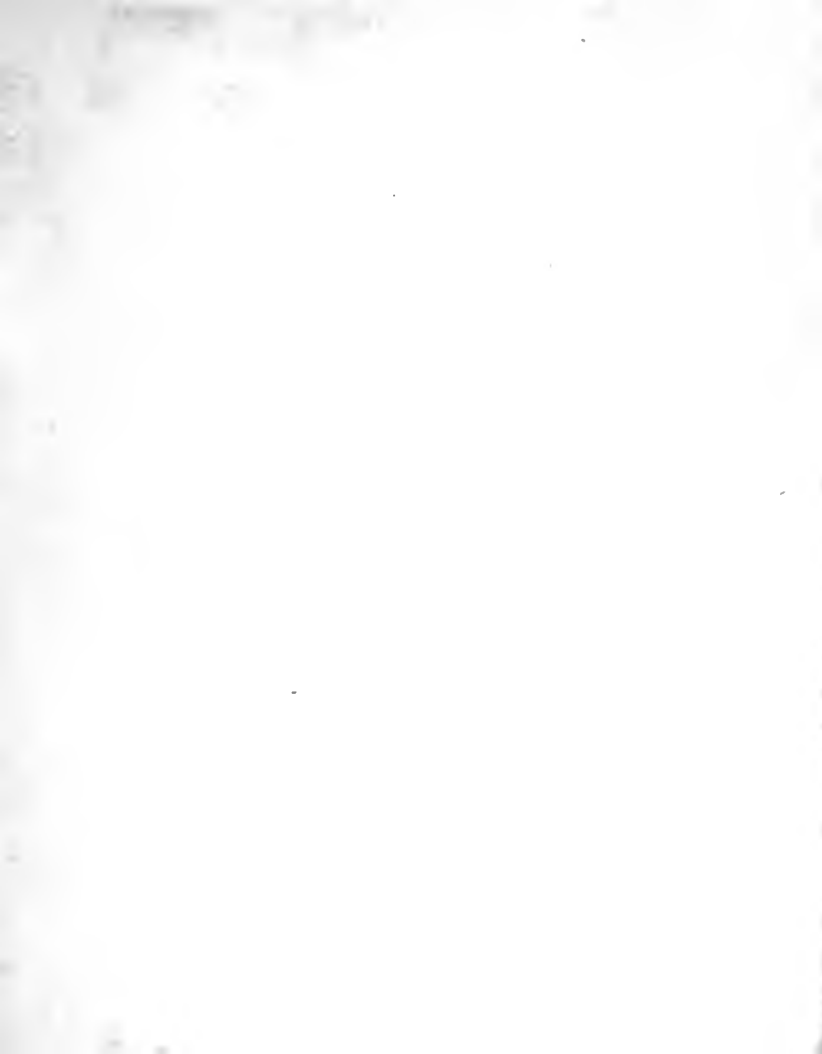
I heard one tell of travels far and wide
Of thrilling dangers, with a mounting pride
Of bold remembered feats, of deserts drear
Crossed by the hardy steps of pioneer
Of buzzing arrows, and the answering crack
Of rifles down the narrow mountain track
Of tropic rivers forded, treasure won,
A hundred reckless deeds of daring done,
Yet—in the midst of tales that blanch the cheek
And tangle all the pulses, when there came
A patter in the passage, and the weak
Assault of arms upon the door, the same
Bold hand that slew and spared not felt the balm
Of baby fingers nestling in its palm.

A Solved Problem.

We wove our hearts together with a string
Of flowers, and wondered that so slight a thing
Had power to bind, but when the flowers were dead,
The lovely hues on leaf and petal fled,
And we essayed to break a tie so vain
Alas! we found it had become a chain
Of cruel links, that did but wound and bruise
The hands that strove to break their iron thews.
Then wonderful! incredible! there came
A tiny fragile hand and lit a flame
Whose warmth transfused by some magician's power
Each cruel link once more into a flower
And thankful hearts looked up to God, and smiled
That love came to them as a little child.

Silence.

Oh! silence, thou unvisioned harp, whose strings
Beneath the touch of every sound vibrate,
Thou shoreless ocean, where like sea-birds' wings
That, fitful, skim the surface of a great
Impassiveness, our little human speech
Scarce ruffles thy repose, then sinks and dies
As echoless as thou. Oh silence! teach
Our human hearts the strength that in thee lies;
The depth of thy eternal calm is wrapped
The fretful circle of our lives about
As the round globe of earth itself is lapped
In the vast vagueness of the air without.
Thou art the voice of God, that underneath
The sounds of Time speaks, eloquent as death.



Webadale, Shoosmith Ltd., Printers, 117 Clarence St., Sydney.





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